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JUNE 2023

# Living

MAGAZINE

# Unplugging

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WELCOME

# UNPLUGGED

Many of you reading this may remember “MTV Unplugged,” a television series on the cable channel MTV that showcased musical artists who played acoustic instruments. As such, the term “unplugged” has come to refer to music that would usually be played on electrified instruments but is rendered instead on instruments that can be played without electricity. Some of the artists who appeared on the MTV show in the 1990s include Eric Clapton, Mariah Carey, Rod Stewart, Nirvana and even Tony Bennett. This different twist on the popular music of the day provided a fresh listen that many of us enjoyed — and still do.



Today, unplugged has another meaning. Even though electrical cords are mostly a thing of the past as we rely on batteries for seemingly everything, the idea of letting go of our electronic devices and getting back to nature — or actually talking with people face to face — has a newfound attraction.

When was the last time you hopped on a bicycle for a leisurely ride, seeing the world at less than 5 mph and breathing in the fresh air?

Or when did you last take a casual swim in a nearby lake, feeling the warmth of the sun on your body?

And how about stretching out in the cool grass at night and gazing up at the numerous stars in the sky, listening only to the chirping of crickets or the hoot on an owl?

Sound relaxing? Then maybe it's time to lay your phone down, put social media on hold and hide the remote control to the TV. In short, unplug. And if you really want to tie this unplugged theme together, find a talented friend who can play an acoustic guitar and sing around a campfire.

If you are a parent, you have likely directed your children to put down their phones or stop playing video games and get outside. I know I have. But maybe instead of giving orders to today's youth, we need to take the advice ourselves and enjoy the aforementioned activities and the many others that are available to us.

Need ideas? Well, you are in luck, as this month's cover story provides examples of what residents are doing with their families to reduce screen time and unplug. See you outside.

Thanks for reading. ■

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Visiting parks is an easy and free way for Michelle Cooper to keep the kids she watches “unplugged” during the summer.



# Unplugging<sup>®</sup>

## FOR SUMMER FUN

Keeping kids busy and active —  
without the screen time

By Chantel Boyd

It's time to put down the cell phones, iPads and video game controllers and turn off the TV, computers and streaming services. It's summer, and that means it's time to get moving, exploring and enjoying the myriad of fun activities available. This summer, stave off your kids' "I'm bored" blues by trying something new or rediscovering good old-fashioned fun. It all starts with hitting the "off" button on electronics.



## Family fun

Madison and Cayson Jost and their two kids, Archer, 2, and Fox, 4, enjoy staying active during the summertime.

“We enjoy fishing, camping, gardening, parks, visiting the zoo and science center and swimming outside. More recently, we have started playing family board games,” says Madison.

Madison and Cayson have enjoyed being “unplugged.”

“We have been kind of doing these things since before the kids were born, but we started going to the Zoo and Science Center just since things have been opened up after the COVID-19 pandemic,” she says.

Madison and Cayson encourage and support their kids in staying unplugged over the summer by being intentional throughout the day, she says. Doing things as a family is how they maintain a healthy balance.

“When we wind down at the end of the day, we might throw on a movie, but, otherwise, we try to be doing something that is not screen time,” Madison shares.

Sometimes the Iowa weather gets in the way.

“The hardest days are when it is sweltering outside, but, even those days, we can paint, do puzzles, and play with toys or games inside instead,” she says.

Since the children are close in age — and so young — they enjoy the simple things, like swings, to fill their time.

“They both could swing all day long, love being outside, and Archer wants to do anything Fox is doing,” Madison says.

Fox is now old enough to participate in sports, and Madison usually takes Archer for a walk or to play games while they wait.

Being unplugged and off screens is important to Madison and Cayson because they enjoy the resulting better moods.

“We feel better when we’re not stuck to a screen, and it seems like it improves everyone’s mood the less we are on screens,” Madison explains.

Madison and Cayson say constructive summer activities have aided their children’s brain development and helped them become more of a team and play together, which will help them when they become school-age.

“I think they have learned to work together, take turns and share better, and they have also improved their problem-solving skills and expressing their creativity.”

Madison also has spent a lot of time with her young children nurturing a garden, which has further aided their development, she says. Bonus — the kids get to have fun in the dirt as they plant and tend to the plants and then harvest the fruits and vegetables.

“The gardening has helped their sense of responsibility, planning and follow through with creating plans on where to plant things and how to keep them alive.”

Madison says her kids may not notice they are being “unplugged”



Fox Jost enjoys fishing.



Madison and Cayson Jost and their two kids, Archer, 2, and Fox, 4, enjoy staying active during the summertime.

## Altoona Summer Activities

### • Summer reading program:

[altoonapubliclibrary.org/summer-reading-program-childrens](http://altoonapubliclibrary.org/summer-reading-program-childrens)

### • Altoona Aquatics:

[www.altoonacampus.com/aquatics/aquatics-park/](http://www.altoonacampus.com/aquatics/aquatics-park/)

### • Adventureland:

[www.adventurelandresort.com](http://www.adventurelandresort.com)

### • Adventure Bay:

[www.adventurelandresort.com/discover-adventureland-resort/adventure-bay](http://www.adventurelandresort.com/discover-adventureland-resort/adventure-bay)

### • Enabling Garden:

[www.altoonachamber.org/choose-altoona/recreation/things-to-see-and-do/enabling-garden](http://www.altoonachamber.org/choose-altoona/recreation/things-to-see-and-do/enabling-garden)

### • 55 parks:

[www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/engineering\\_\\_\\_public\\_works/parks/index.php](http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/engineering___public_works/parks/index.php)

### • SEP Summer Camps:

[www.southeastpolk.org/backpack/camps-scouts/](http://www.southeastpolk.org/backpack/camps-scouts/)

during the summer because the family tries to keep this a part of their everyday routine.

“We’ve always been a bit of an active family, so we’re just expanding our activities and making them more kid-oriented as they grow.”

## Keeping a group of kids active

Michelle Marie Cooper owns and operates a home daycare for school-age kids, so she is well-versed in keeping kids active. Having cared for kids for more than 25 years, she knows that being unplugged, especially in the summer, benefits children’s development.

Caring for children in the summer is a family affair for Michelle’s family. Michelle’s oldest daughter, Caitlin Johnson, 24, is a Des Moines Public Schools teacher; her middle daughter, Michaela Cooper, 21, is a student at the University of Northern Iowa; and her youngest, Brooklyn Cooper, is going to be a sophomore at Southeast Polk. Her son, Josh



Cooper, 25, lives in Colorado.

"My daughters are a huge support system for me and my daycare," Michelle says.

Michelle's daughters knew firsthand how being unplugged during the summer supported their development; now, they are turning around and doing the same for other children while helping their mom.

"They help me research and plan activities and go along with us on field trips when we need another set of hands."

In the summer, Michelle and her daughters look for ways for her daycare children to stay busy. The crew enjoys going to the library and participating in the many free activities offered there as well as in the community, such as the Movie Club Wednesdays at the theater. They also go to as many different parks over the summer as possible.

"We take along a bag full of activities to help keep everyone busy," says Michelle, adding they will take a picnic lunch to enjoy while they are out.

The group also finds ways to help in their community, like picking up trash safely and gathering items to donate to the Animal Rescue



Michelle Cooper and her daughters Michaela Cooper, Caitlin Johnson and Brooklynn Cooper plan a variety of summer fun for the school-age kids they watch over the summer.

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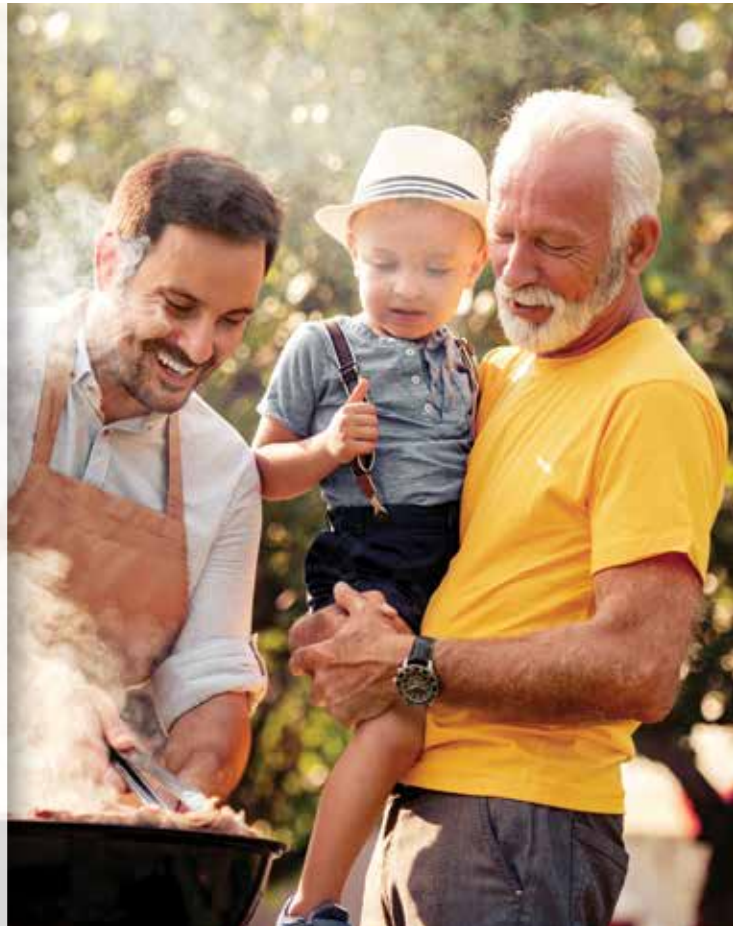
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Brooklynn and Brinklee Nelson participate in dance and pageants.



Melissa Garrett Nelson and her husband, Pete Nelson, have a busy family with daughters, Brooklynn and Brinklee, participating in many activities.

League.

They also enjoy playing with Michelle's furry friends. They learn to appropriately interact with dogs and cats and give basic commands like sit and down.

"My house has cats and dogs for the kids to enjoy. This is a huge benefit to the kids that don't have access to animals at home."

Michelle says it is important to keep the kids busy but not so busy they don't have time to play and use their imaginations. Michelle shares that these kid-led activities often turn out to be the most memorable.

"Sometimes, the best way to keep kids busy is to give them the freedom to help plan their day. On days we don't have something scheduled, we will get together and come up with some ideas of what they would like to do."

## Beauty pageants and dance

Melissa Garrett Nelson and her husband, Pete Nelson, have two daughters, Brooklynn, who is 17 years old and just graduated from Southeast Polk High School, and Brinklee, who is 6 years old and just finished kindergarten. Both keep them busy throughout the year.

This summer, Brooklynn will continue her competitions in dancing and beauty pageants. Brinklee is following in her big sister's footsteps by competing in dance, so they will not have much free time to be on their screens.

Brooklynn currently holds the title of Miss Wild Rose's Teen and will compete in the Miss Iowa Teen competition. Brooklynn is completing her 15th year of competitive dance at Becky Nalevanko's Dance and Tumbling Studio, while Brinklee is in her fourth year. Both will have a dance recital in June.

Throughout the summer, the girls will travel to nationals to compete in dance. In addition, Brooklyn volunteers her time helping young dancers at dance camps. Brinklee is enrolled in Miss Iowa's Rising Star Camp and takes private dance training lessons at the dance studio.

Beyond dance, both girls are active in other activities.

"Brinklee will finish her spring soccer season in June, and Brooklynn will work at the fair," explains Melissa.

Both girls will spend time with their grandparents this summer before Brooklynn moves to college in August.

"Brinklee will spend a few weeks staying for her yearly 'Grandparent Camp Outs,' which give her a lot of her grandparents' one-on-one time," says Melissa.

Brooklynn will spend time traveling across Iowa this summer to represent her hometown of Altoona at festivals, parades and other activities.

"Brooklyn is very active in helping spread the word on her volunteer platforms," says Melissa.

Both girls have been participating in dance for some time. Brooklynn started dancing at age 3, and she began her scholarship pageant journey when she was 9 and became Junior Miss Iowa. Brinklee started dancing at 2 years old, and her first time at Miss Iowa Rising Star Camp was last year.

Staying unplugged has helped both girls remain focused on their dance craft. Brooklyn will have to be on devices to prepare for college and her work with the Miss Iowa Organization, but only some of the time.

"She will be the first to put down the phone to play a competitive game at family game night. And Brinklee would rather be outside playing than be on her tablet."

To support their daughters in limited screen time, Melissa and Pete are intentional about family time, where they go on family bike rides, enjoy picnics at the park or at the school playgrounds, and have a family game or movie night.

"We all get our jammies on and make beds in the living room, turn off the lights, eat popcorn and watch a movie," Melissa says.

Spending family time together and providing kids with activities that keep them involved with others, is important, says Melissa.

"They are only little once, and someday they will have to be busy with work and have enough screen time," she says. ■

# RUNNING club brings enthusiasts together

Millard leads local club.

Matt Millard has a way of bringing people together.

In September 2018, he helped start the Altoona Running Club and currently serves as president. The club was created in response to local runners looking for other people to run with and feel safe doing so.

"This was right after the tragedy surrounding the death of Iowa runner Mollie Tibbetts while she was out for a solo run," Millard explains. "Our community of runners has created a private Facebook group that is used to coordinate runs with partners or group runs."

He adds that the Altoona Running Club encourages all forms of running activities.

"We have members in the group who are casual runners, 5K to 10K runners, half and full marathoners, trail runners and ultra-marathoners," he says. "We have 540 people in our Facebook group and around 50 paying members. We have put on two races and are expanding to possibly four next year."

In addition to his work with the Altoona Running Club, Millard is a newly appointed Altoona Parks and Recreation board member.

"It's a perfect fit for me since I'm out running with the club at least every Thursday all year round on the bike paths," he says. "The new members of the board are hoping to see our parks and recreation opportunities in Altoona continue to keep pace with the rapid growth of our community."

For Millard, who has lived in Altoona since 1997 (fun fact: he met his wife, Sarah, in high school when she was working at Adventureland), the community is simply a great place in which to live.

"We have such great trails in town and connecting to Pleasant Hill," he says. "It's changed a lot but still has that smaller-town feel to it. I can go to the store and almost always see people that I know."

One special thing Millard has accomplished over the years is running every mile of street in Altoona.

"You could say I've seen all of Altoona and its different neighborhoods," Millard says. "With the continued growth of Altoona, I'll never really be done, but it was a fun project. It even spurred me to run streets in nine other towns."

He also enjoys being part of a community of people who care about it.

"A while back, a friend, Pam Moody, reached out on Facebook looking for people to help clean up the creek area by Casey's and Target," Millard shares.

"We had around 20 people step up and collect a huge amount of trash. I've continued that with our running club, and we do an Earth Day trail clean up each year." ■



Matt Millard helped start the Altoona Running Club.



The Altoona Running Club cleans trails as an Earth Day activity.



# TIPS before buying down your interest rate

The mortgage interest rate buydown option, also called “paying discount points,” is a one-time fee paid at closing that lowers your interest rate temporarily or for the entire loan term.

But before deciding to pay discount points, consider these important questions:

## 1. What is your break-even point?

Mortgage buydown can be an expensive option, so it's important to determine the point at which your interest savings will outweigh the upfront buydown cost.

The cost of permanent interest rate buydown varies based on your lender and loan amount. Generally, each discount point costs 1% of the loan amount and will reduce your interest rate by approximately 0.25%. This means you would need to buy four points to lower your interest rate by one percent.

## 2. Is your seller or builder offering to buy



## discount points?

Most buydowns are negotiated between buyers and lenders, though sellers and builders can also purchase discount points to lower the buyer's interest rate. This is especially common in slower markets, as sellers and builders are typically more motivated to attract buyers.

## 3. Which structure would be most advantageous?

As mentioned above, mortgage buydowns have either a temporary or permanent structure. Temporary structures lower the interest rate to a certain percentage, then increase each year until it returns to the original rate.

### Temporary options include:

- 1-0 buydown: Interest rate is 1% lower than the original rate for the first year.
- 2-1 buydown: Interest rate is 2% lower for the first year and 1% lower for the second.
- 3-2-1 buydown: Interest rate is 3% lower for the first year, 2% lower the second and 1% lower the third.

## 4. What upcoming changes or decisions do

## you anticipate?

The purpose of a mortgage buydown is to pay more money up front so you can save money in the long run. If you anticipate refinancing your loan when rates drop or moving again in the near future, you likely won't realize savings that should result from the money you paid up front. In these cases, a temporary mortgage buydown might not be the best option.

If you currently have extra liquidity or anticipate your household income will increase significantly in the next few years, it's definitely worth looking into the temporary mortgage buydown option. ■

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# HOSPICE services: Chances are they're not what you think

Charles had been living with diabetes and related conditions for several years when his health took a turn, and he was told his condition was life-limiting. Although Charles knew he was very ill, he and his wife, Carrie, were stunned when Charles' doctor began talking about the benefits of hospice services.

"We were so confused; we knew hospice is for people who are ready to die, and, in our minds, Charles certainly was not that sick," Carrie says. "The doctor had said there was not anything new they could do for him, and his diabetes had taken a toll on his whole system, and he had had two strokes. But I thought he was doing better. So, when we heard that, we didn't know what to do."

The doctor took the time to explain that even though he did feel Charles had some time, he qualified for hospice services because he had a life-limiting illness and that hospice care would



afford him some amenities — all covered by insurance — that could enhance his quality of life.

That made sense to Charles and Carrie, and they decided to look into home hospice services. After their adult children had returned to their homes out of state after the holidays, Carrie scheduled a meeting with a care team.

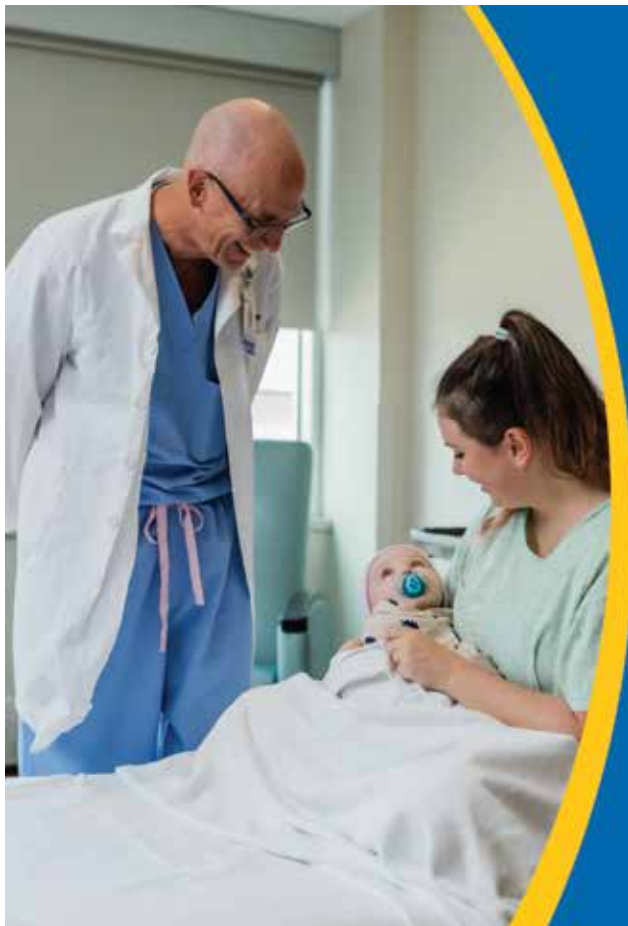
"We learned in that first meeting that there was a lot we didn't know," Carrie recalls. "They talked about pet therapy and music therapy and all kinds of things that ended up making Charles' quality of life the best it could have been in those last months. He lived for eight more months and was content and comfortable almost all the time."

Ideally, hospice services can and should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for services, enabling an individual to live life in comfort for the days, weeks or months that remain in their life. And, the earlier hospice services are started, the more they can — as in Charles' case — benefit the person who is ill as well as the whole family.

"The hospice team was there when we needed them but also left us alone to have a lot of family time, and the kids and I were all very comfortable with how they fit into our lives," Carrie says. "When Charles took a turn for the worse, and it was clear there was not much time left, the hospice nurses made sure he was never in pain. When he passed, it was very peaceful, and they have been very supportive to all of us, even since then."

If you and your family are faced with the need to make a decision around hospice care, feelings of anger and confusion are normal and making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult. But know that, once you've taken that first step, having care in place can make your loved one's last weeks and months more relaxed and meaningful for them — and for all who love them. ■

Ward Phillips is vice president of market strategy and business development for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice services, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.



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# EMOTIONAL vs. strategic decisions

Information vs. instinct. When it comes to investing, many people believe they have a “knack” for choosing good investments. But what exactly is that “knack” based on? The fact is, the choices we make with our assets can be strongly influenced by factors, many of them emotional, that we may not even be aware of.

**Investing involves risks.** Remember that investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon and risk tolerance. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost.

**Deal du jour.** You’ve heard the whispers, the “next greatest thing” is out there, and you can get on board, but only if you hurry. Sound familiar? The prospect of being on the ground floor of the next big thing can be thrilling. But while there really are great new opportunities out there once in a while, those “hot new investments” can often



go south quickly. Jumping on board without all the information can be a mistake. A disciplined investor may turn away from spur-of-the-moment trends and seek out solid, proven investments with consistent returns.

**Risky business.** Many people claim not to be risk-takers, but that isn’t always the case. Most disciplined investors aren’t reluctant to take a risk. But they will attempt to manage losses. By keeping your final goals in mind as you weigh both the potential gain and potential loss, you may be able to better assess what risks you are prepared to take.

**You can’t always know what’s coming.** Some investors attempt to predict the future based on the past. As we all know, just because a stock rose yesterday doesn’t mean it will rise again today. In fact, performance does not guarantee future results.

**The gut-driven investor.** Some investors tend to pull out of investments the moment they lose money, then invest again once they feel “driven” to do so. While they may do some research, they are ultimately acting on impulse. This method of investing may result in losses.

**Eliminating emotion.** Many investors “stir

up” their investments when major events happen, including births, marriages or deaths. They seem to get a renewed interest in their stocks and/or begin to second-guess the effectiveness of their long-term strategies. A financial professional can help you focus on your long-term objectives and may help you manage being influenced by short-term whims. ■

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# WHY DID God let it happen?

I've seen heartbreaking tragedies in the lives of those around me: a difficult divorce, the loss of a job, the death of a child. When I broaden my view, I see war, disease, violence and countless other accounts of human suffering. There's a question that can surface in the face of pain: Why did God let it happen?



If you've wondered, "Why did God let it happen?" you're not alone. In fact, you are in pretty good company. We find it throughout the Bible: Jeremiah, David, even Jesus. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Jesus, the perfect Son of God, with his final words, asks, "Why God? Why are you letting this happen?" If Jesus can ask this question, so can we.

It's an important question to ask. When we bring our pain and questions to God, we discover a more honest and authentic relationship with God. We find we can be real, and God doesn't leave us.

When we ask God, "Why?" there aren't easy answers. In fact, in all those Biblical examples above, God never gave a direct answer. And so, I don't have one either. But I do know two things.

I know God is going to make everything right. God has a plan to restore all things, including you. He's not going to leave you where you are. His plan is centered on Jesus, who came 2,000 years ago to die for our sins and conquer death. When He returns to complete the plan, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." And then Jesus promised, "I will make everything new!" (Revelation 21:4-5). This is our hope. Today is not right, but one day it will be.

I know God is with you. When you sit at the bottom of the deepest and darkest pit, Jesus is there. It may feel like God is far away and doesn't care. However, the cross of Christ says something different. The cross says Jesus took on our sin, despair, death and brokenness to the fullest extent. Jesus completely identified with our suffering, so He could be with us in our suffering. Jesus enters into your depression, into your cancer, into your broken relationship, into your death and says, I AM. HERE. Jesus suffered so you would never be separated from God's love.

I don't know the answer to the "why." But I know God's promises. When you wrestle with the "why," I pray your questions lead you to the One who is with you and will make everything right. ■

Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson, Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-4818.

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY

515-286-3624

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VITAL RECORDS

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515-286-3160

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515-286-3160

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515-323-5400

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515-286-3030

PROPERTY TAX

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**POLK COUNTY**  
Board of Supervisors





# Polk County North/East Side Highlights



## Polk County Acquires Sleepy Hollow Sports Park

Polk County has purchased **Sleepy Hollow Sports Park**. The addition of Sleepy Hollow will add to the inventory of parks and recreational opportunities of the Polk County Conservation Department. Plans are in the works for renovations and upgrades to the 76-acre sports and family recreation complex located on **Polk County's East Side**.

## Polk County Partners with Agriculture Industry, Conservation for Seeder Crop Program

Whether you live in a rural or urban area, water quality impacts all of us. Polk County is partnering with the agriculture industry for a pilot project in the **Northern part of Polk County**. This **seeder cover crop program** will assist farmers and landowners upstream to apply cover crops to their fields in an effort to prevent soil erosion and run-off into streams and rivers.



## Polk County Gives Funds for a New Four Mile Elementary Playground

Polk County presented a \$75,000 Community Development Grant to **Southeast Polk Schools** for construction of new state-of-the-art playground for students of **Four Mile elementary**. In addition to the improved safety features, the new playground will feature century walls, new slides, climbing capabilities, and is ADA accessible. This is the 5th playground Polk County has helped fund in the district in the past 6 years.

## Fourmile Creek Greenway Clean-Up Effort Underway

Polk County, the City of Des Moines, and Iowa Department of Agriculture are in the process of creating a 450-acre urban linear park through the heart of **Des Moines**. This reconstructed watershed will provide additional recreational opportunities and help clean and restore our waterways. Perhaps most importantly this effort will help mitigate flooding.





## CHIROPRACTIC and sports

Sports are an excellent way to stay active and socially connected, but stress, strain and trauma to the body occur when the body isn't given the tools it needs to repair and restore. Untreated, the accumulation of these traumas will adversely affect health and mobility.

Doctors of chiropractic are licensed and trained to care for the neuromusculoskeletal system and can provide advice on sports training, nutrition and injury prevention to athletes. A thorough chiropractic evaluation and care plan based on that clinical assessment can keep athletes in the game and help to minimize and prevent injuries, particularly spinal injuries.

Chiropractic care should be a part of every athlete's well care no matter the age or competition level to maintain a healthy nervous system and musculoskeletal system, increase performance and prevent injuries. Through childhood and adolescence, the body is still growing and developing, making it susceptible to injury. Often, minor spinal injuries go unnoticed until adulthood, and thus it takes longer to make corrections. For adults, a healthy nervous system and musculoskeletal system are important for longevity and to maintain mobility.

When the nervous system is healthy and the spine is aligned, the brain and body are able to communicate optimally providing the following benefits: increased reaction times, coordination, balance, proprioception and range of motion; sufficient oxygenation; more energy and stamina; and decreased risk of injury. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

## MEET Scott Enyart

Teaching and dance announcing among hats he wears

Scott Enyart grew up on a small family farm between Monroe and Prairie City where his family raised hogs and cattle and grew corn and soybeans. After graduating from Prairie City Monroe High School in 1996, he attended Central College where he was captain of the men's golf team both his junior and senior year.

Enyart then taught fourth grade for 20 years at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. During that time, he was also the head girls' golf coach for 19 years, the assistant boys' golf coach for 15 years, a ninth-grade girls' basketball coach for two years, and helped with offseason softball for four years.

Today, Enyart teaches fifth grade for the Southeast Polk Community School District. Enyart says when the opportunity to teach at Centennial Elementary School presented itself in 2020, it was a great move for his family and provided an opportunity for him to be challenged professionally.

"It happened to be the same school my two daughters attended since our moving to Altoona in 2016. They had a wonderful experience at Centennial — so much so that I could see myself as part of the Centennial family," he says.

Enyart enjoys working with fifth-grade students because of their fun conversations, whether about characters in books, the history of the United States, or discovering strategies for solving math problems. Enyart also enjoys the challenge of creating opportunities to show his students' understanding in their own creative ways.

This past school year, Enyart's students visited the Environmental Learning Center where they investigated how living and nonliving things interact in an ecosystem. In the past, his students have also partnered with the "Trees for Kids" grant program. For this program, three trees were planted on the Centennial Elementary School property, and students were given the opportunity to choose trees that fit the climate as well as help improve their school's appearance.

"The greatest reward I receive as an educator is seeing the kids I've had in elementary discover their interests and talents that lead them to success in life," he says.

When not teaching, Enyart enjoys spending time with his family, golfing and working on the grounds crew at Toad Valley Golf Course. He is also the main announcer at the Iowa State Dance Team Championships in Des Moines at Wells Fargo Arena. He has been one of the lead commentators for the Iowa PBS Championship Show for the Iowa State Dance Team Championships for nearly 20 years and has announced both regional and national dance contests for MA Dance during the past 20 years. ■



Scott Enyart teaches at Centennial Elementary School, where his kids had attended.

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**Elizabeth Burns-Thompson**

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## Building Official

**515-967-5138**

## Planning & Zoning Department

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## Public Works Director

**515-967-5136**

## 1ST AVE ROAD CLOSURE

Altoona residents and visitors, be aware of some major road construction that could impact how you travel around our city. As of Monday, June 12, a stretch of 1st Avenue, north of 8th Street and south of 2nd Street SE, is closed for construction.

This roadwork is the third, and final, phase of a multi-year project on 1st Avenue. In this final phase, crews will work to widen and rebuild the roadway and install critical infrastructure and public utilities including new trails and sidewalks. As the project begins, the first stage will require 1st Avenue to be completely closed to traffic between 8th Street and 7th Street.

During road closures, through traffic should detour to travel on 2nd Street NW, 5th Avenue NW and 8th Street. The city will share regular updates on this construction work at [altoona-iowa.com](http://altoona-iowa.com).



## INDEPENDENCE DAY

City Hall is closed for Independence Day on Tuesday, July 4, 2023. The holiday will impact garbage and yard waste pick-up for some residents. Those who typically have pick-ups on Tuesdays will be delayed one day and should instead place their carts and/or yard waste bags at the curb for pick-up on Wednesday, July 5. There will be no delay for those with Monday pick-ups.



## FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

Celebrate Independence Day at the annual parade! The parade starts at 10 a.m. and travels along 8th Street starting at Venbury Dr and turns north to travel on 3rd Ave SE towards Haines Park. View the parade route at [altoona-iowa.com](http://altoona-iowa.com).

## CORNIVAL CORNVOY

Join the Altoona Arts and Culture Commission for the unveiling of the CORNival CORNvoy statues on Tuesday, July 4. Following the parade, the Arts and Culture Commission and Altoona Historical Society will sponsor a family-friendly event at Haines Park, with live music, inflatables, cornhole and the unveiling of the 6-foot-tall corn statues! Learn more at [altoona-iowa.com](http://altoona-iowa.com).

## SAVE THE DATE FOR SUMMER FUN

• **Thursday, July 27** – Thousands of cyclists will roll through Altoona on **RAGBRAI**. A festival area to welcome riders will be set up at Spring Creek Park and Sports Complex.

• **Saturday, August 26** – **Altoona Palooza** at the Sam Wise Sports Complex



## SIGN UP FOR WATER UTILITY E-BILLING

Cut down on the amount of mail you receive each month, skip the postcards, and sign up to receive your City of Altoona Water Bill directly in your email inbox each month. Reminder that utility bills are due by 4:30 p.m. on the third of every month.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Utility Billing Clerk at 515-967-5136 or visit [altoona-iowa.com](http://altoona-iowa.com) for details!



Be sure to check for cancelations.



## Garden education

## Enabling Garden

### July 25

Polk County Extension and Outreach Master Gardeners, who maintain the Enabling Garden, will present an education event about gardening. There will also be volunteers running an art station, seed planting station, music stations, a story walk and more. This event is organized by the Children's Art Committee of the Master Gardeners.

# WillowFest

Monday, July 3, 6 p.m.  
Willowbrook Elementary

WillowFest is a brand new festival, supporting a need to have a family-friendly, free-to-attend, evening event to celebrate summer, fireworks and our independence. Bring the family, your lawn chairs and blankets, and enjoy some fun.



## Music in the Park

Sundays, June 25, July 30,  
Aug. 27 from 6-8 p.m.  
Haines Park Outdoor  
Stage, 700 Block of Third  
Ave. S.E., Altoona

Enjoy free concerts in the park monthly during the summer.



# Altoona RAGBRAI Celebration

July 27, 5 a.m. to noon  
Spring Creek Sports  
Complex on Edwin  
Skinner

Join the fun as RAGBRAI comes through Altoona. The public is asked to park at St. John and St. Paul Church. Busing will be available to the sports complex. Enjoy food vendors, beer tents, music and more.



## Craft and Vendor Show

June 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Bondurant Legion Hall, 315  
Second St. N.W.

Valerie and Cathy's Boutique is hosting this monthly craft and vendor show.

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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

### Summer Stir

Friday, July 21, 5-9 p.m.  
Historic East Village

Join CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail party. Visit many great establishments in the early evening and sample their signature Summer Stir drinks. For only \$25 (prepaid online, visit [summerstirs.dmcityview.com](http://summerstirs.dmcityview.com)), participants will receive 10 tickets to use to sample drinks at any of the participating venues. Tickets may also be purchased at the event for \$30. All of the establishments will be within walking distance.



### Leprechaun Bags Tournament

July 15, noon  
Sully's Irish Pub, 860 First St.,  
West Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are hosting a bags tournament to raise funds for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Registration begins at 11 a.m. with play starting at noon. The fee is \$30 per two-person team, with advanced or beginner divisions. Prizes awarded and fun for all. Visit [www.friendlysonsiowa.com](http://www.friendlysonsiowa.com) for more information.



### Bondu Blues & Brews Festival

Saturday, July 15, 6:30-10 p.m.  
Bondurant Regional Trailhead, 2 Main St. S.E.

This is a family-friendly event at Bondurant's iconic regional trailhead in the heart of the Chichaqua Valley Trail system. The evening includes two Des Moines-based blues bands, so you are invited to bring your lawn chairs, blankets, friends and family. Enjoy food trucks, bounce houses, face painting, balloon animals, and ice-cold treats.

After the opening act, the home brew competition judges reveal the home brew winners. Bondurant's local Reclaimed Rails Brewing Company collects home brew submissions from all of Central Iowa. Pre-Register and drop off home brews before Monday, July 9, to participate. Register at <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eju037if81ff8756&oseq=&c=&ch=>.

Showcased along the Chichaqua Valley Trail is art from the Sidewalk Chalk Art Competition held earlier in the day. The public is encouraged to participate in a people's choice vote on the art showcased by Bondurant natives. This year's Sidewalk Chalk Art Prizes winners will be announced at 8:45 p.m.



### Music Under the Stars

Various dates and locations

Music Under the Stars, one of the oldest musical traditions in Central Iowa, is in its 76th season. The season includes free concerts on June 25, July 2, July 9 and July 16. All concerts begin at 7 p.m. and conclude by 8:30 p.m. Four of this summer's concerts will take place on the West Capitol Mall. However, for the first time in the concert band's history, Music Under the Stars will relocate to the Lauridsen Amphitheater at Des Moines Water Works Park July 9 and July 16.

**June 25**, "76 Trombones," Guest Artist: Dr. Tony Baker, trombone. Vocals: Kellie Kramer

**July 2**, "Stars and Stripes and Sousa," Vocals: Napoleon Douglas

**July 9**, Lauridsen Amphitheater at Water Works Park, "Musical Madness," Vocals: Max Wellman

**July 16**, Lauridsen Amphitheater at Water Works Park, "Down on Bourbon Street" featuring NOLA. Vocals: Abbie Sawyer

Program details may be found at the Music Under the Stars website at [www.musicunderthestars.org](http://www.musicunderthestars.org). ■



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## RECIPE

# SHAREABLE sliders for a nutritious summer meal

(Family Features) Fresh, mouthwatering food hot off the grill is a sure sign of summer fun. Hosting sunny get-togethers this year can be made easy when you show off your grilling skills with a simple, nutritious and flavorful recipe.

These Chicken Shawarma Sliders are a delicious example of how to grill healthy summer meals without forgoing favorite flavors. They're part of a curated 12-recipe collection of healthy, balanced dishes from the snacking experts at family-owned Fresh Cravings, known for its chilled salsas, hummus and other dips, which teamed up with eMeals, America's leading provider of meal plans.

"These sliders are a fantastic — and healthy — option for your next gathering," said eMeals Senior Nutrition Writer and Editor Rachel West, RD. "The marinade uses a mix of pantry-friendly dried herbs and fresh garlic to give the lean grilled chicken breast some oomph. The lettuce and red onion add cool crispness and crunch to the sandwiches while Fresh Cravings' creamy, flavor-packed hummus gets some nutritional bonus points by providing a dose of protein and fiber."

Find the entire recipe collection by visiting [emeals.com/campaign/Fresh-Cravings-Healthy-Eats](https://emeals.com/campaign/Fresh-Cravings-Healthy-Eats). ■

## Chicken Shawarma Sliders

Recipe courtesy of eMeals  
Registered Dietitian Rachel West  
Prep time: 25 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes

- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1/2 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 package (12) slider buns
- 1 container (17 ounces) Fresh Cravings Honey Jalapeno Hummus
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded lettuce
- 1/2 small red onion, sliced



### DIRECTIONS

- In zip-top plastic bag, use meat mallet or heel of hand to pound chicken to even thickness. Cut into 2-inch pieces and place in large bowl. Add oil, garlic, paprika, cumin, coriander, salt and cayenne; toss.
- Cover chicken and chill 8 hours, or up to 2 days.
- Preheat grill or grill pan to medium-high heat. Grill chicken 4-5 minutes per side, or until done.
- Serve chicken on buns with hummus, lettuce and onion.

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**July 18**  
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**July 20**  
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**July 22**  
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## SPENCER'S opens at Outlets of Des Moines

Outlets of Des Moines announced the opening of Spencer's. Located in Space 210 at 2,595 square feet, Spencer's features the latest trends, tees, body jewelry, décor and more. Spencer's specializes in unique, trendy, and fad-based merchandise which provides shoppers with entertainment and amusement. Founded in 1947 as a mail-order catalog in Pennsylvania, the company opened its first brick-and-mortar store in 1963 and has since grown to 680 retail locations, in addition to an online presence. ■

## FINAL phase of construction to impact travel on First Avenue S.

Altoona residents and visitors should be aware of major road construction underway. First Avenue S. will be closed for the third and final phase of a multi-year construction project.

Roadwork on this final phase will occur in five stages, starting in June and continuing through the rest of the year. Through traffic will not be able to travel in the construction area during the project and should instead detour to travel on Second St. N.W., Fifth Avenue N.W. and Eighth Street S.W./S.E. during construction. ■



## FIND your voice at the library

It's not too late to participate in our summer reading challenge for all ages. Find more information on programs, reading incentives and fun prizes at [altoonalibrary.com](http://altoonalibrary.com).

### Adult programming – Ages 18 and older

#### • Cricut Studio, Wednesday, July 12 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Come learn the basics of using a Cricut Maker and practice on your own project. All supplies provided. Registration required.

• **Iowa Storm Chasers, Wednesday, July 19 at 6 p.m.** Ever wondered how storm chasers forecast and how they stay safe while storm chasing? Join us for this presentation on the science behind storm chasing and ways to protect yourself during severe weather. Registration required.

• **Macramade: Feathers, Saturday, July 22 at 2 p.m.** We're making macrame feather keychains. All materials provided. Registration required.

#### • Beginning Genealogy, Saturday, July 29 at 2 p.m.

Want to learn more about your family tree but not sure where to start? Join us for this introduction to genealogy with the Iowa Genealogical Society. Registration required.

### Children's programming

• **Storytime Swim, Thursdays through Aug. 3 from 11:15-11:45 a.m.** Join us at the Altoona Aquatics Park for a short storytime in the shallow end of the pool. Recommended for children ages 8 and younger, but siblings may also attend. No registration or entrance fee required.

• **Super Cold Science with the Grout Museum, Friday, July 14, at 3 p.m.** Watch several liquid nitrogen experiments and enjoy a super cold treat. For grades K-6. No registration required.

• **Upcycle Runway, Tuesday, July 18 at 6 p.m.** Want to be a fashion designer? We're upcycling some old clothes into runway-ready looks. You will have 90 minutes to "make it work." Invite your friends and family to our Runway Show at 7:30 p.m. to show off your designs. For grades 5-6. Registration required.

• **Balloon Art Storytelling, Monday, July 24 at 3 p.m.** Storytelling with balloon creations. This highly interactive program is led by Twisted Bokay. For ages 12 and younger. Registration required.

### Teen programming

#### • Game Show Night, Thursday, June 29 from 6-7 p.m.

Come on down to the library for games like Jeopardy, Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader? and Wheel of Fortune. For grades 7-12. Registration required.

• **Explosion Book Printmaking, Monday, July 10 from 6-8 p.m.** Have a blast making a one-of-a-kind, small book that "explodes" into pages of squares and triangles featuring your artwork. For grades 7-12. Registration required. ■



# Bondurant-Farrar Community Schools' **SUPPORT STAFF JOB FAIR**

Open house event. No registration needed.

WEDNESDAY, | **9-11 AM**  
**July 12** | **3-5 PM**

300 Garfield Street SW, Bondurant, Iowa  
(Enter at intersection of 3rd St. & Garfield St.)

## **We're Hiring:**

- Bus Drivers
- Food Service
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**Please join us on July 12!**

You are invited to Bondurant-Farrar's upcoming Support Staff Job Fair, an open house style event where individuals can speak with district leaders about job openings and opportunities!

- Bring resume and references, if possible
- Option to apply on-site with staff assistance

Please call our district office at 515-967-7819 with any questions you may have. We look forward to welcoming you to Bondurant for this hiring event!



## **Employment Benefits:**

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## IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

By Chantel Boyd

## PALMER follows path of both parents

Officer knew he wanted to go into law enforcement.



Tyler Palmer and his dad, Steve Palmer, who passed away in 2020.



Tyler Palmer and his mom, Vikki Palmer.

It isn't uncommon to hear that someone is following in a parent's footsteps when pursuing a career. For Tyler Palmer, an Altoona police officer, the story is a bit different. He is following in both his parents' footsteps.

"I had two parents in law enforcement, and they loved what they did; I knew I had to do it as well."

Tyler's parents served in the Army National Guard, where they met in 1985 before becoming police officers.

Steve Palmer, who passed away in 2020, was an officer in Altoona starting in the late 1970s. He left the force for a while, but returned, serving in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the early 2000s, he became an investigator in the Polk County Attorney's Office, retiring in 2009.

Tyler's mother, Vikki Palmer, was a sergeant at the Polk County Sheriff's Office beginning in 1994 until retiring in 2016.

Tyler was a sheriff's deputy until June 2016 when he joined the Altoona Police Department.

"Having two parents in law enforcement, I felt I had no choice but to be a police officer," he says. "I started the journey to becoming a police officer when I was 13; I joined the Polk County Sheriff's Office Explorer Program. Then, at 18, I started as a detention officer, and my mom was my supervisor."

Tyler knew his biggest advantage was knowing what the job entails and the references and resources available to him to do his job well.

Tyler's advice to others who want to follow in their parent's footsteps is to "listen to your parents; they have been through it and know what's right and wrong in that specific field."

Vikki's advice is very similar.

"Appreciate the stories your parents share as they pass them on. Then, listen when asking for advice because they probably have been through a similar situation." ■



# CLASSIC cars are a labor of love

Allen enjoys retirement working on cars.



Tom and Jennifer Allen with dog, Harley, and their cars.

Tom and Jennifer Allen of rural Altoona are enjoying retirement, and part of that involves their restored classic cars.

"I've worked on cars ever since I started driving," says Tom. "And then it kind of grew, and then I bought my own body shop."

But, the body shop didn't last long as Tom and Jennifer got married, raised a family and farmed.

"As time went on, the kids got raised, and we got rid of the cattle and hogs," which left more time to work on vehicles. He bought a 1937 Chevrolet, only to find out it was a "14 karat turd. You can polish a turd, but it's still a turd."

But rather than give up, he began the long process of restoring the car.

One of the challenges in restoring classic cars is that parts can be hard to come by — and expensive — so Tom sometimes has to make a part to fit the need. Tom's skill and attention to detail show through in the results, as his cars have been entered in many car shows and parades, and he has numerous trophies to show for it. Although Tom does most of the work himself, he admits that he "shops out" certain things, such as upholstery.

Currently, Tom's garage holds the 1937 Chevy, a 1940 Chevy, and two 1954 Nash Metropolitans. He points out that one is a rare Metropolitan NKI Custom, and said that car is "still a work in progress." But, to quote a Nike advertisement, there is no finish line. Tom has several other old vehicles he has started working on, and he doesn't back down from a challenge.

He has even built rotisseries to mount vehicles on, so he can rotate the frame or chassis into proper position for whatever welding, sanding or painting is required.



Tom Allen restores his cars to good as new — or even better.



Tom Allen's 1954 Nash Metropolitan.

Tom and Jennifer enjoy taking their cars out on the open road, but some are more appropriate for long drives than others. They explain the 1940 Chevy doesn't have air conditioning or power steering, so it tends to stay within 50 miles of home. But the 1937 Chevy runs so smoothly it's been driven to shows hundreds of miles away, and, Tom adds with a grin, "That one loves 80 miles an hour." ■




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## HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

# CANNABINOIDS: What they are and are not

You may have heard of CBD (cannabidiol) as a popular health and wellness product. It has quickly become a rising star because it has so many benefits to offer. To be clear, hemp-derived CBD is not marijuana, and it will not get you high. CBD is non-habit forming and is not addictive.

You may not know that hemp-derived THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is also legally available in many CBD stores. Hemp-derived THC is great for assistance with discomfort and sleep, and it has the same intoxicating effects as marijuana-derived THC.

Whether it's body or joint discomfort, stress and anxiety, sleeplessness or lack of energy, cannabinoids can be a major help in bringing a person back to balance. A popular form to ingest it is known as a tincture, applied beneath the tongue for absorption, but there are also edibles, capsules, water solubles, topicals and much more.

Cannabinoids interact with the endocannabinoid system to assist the body in regaining its natural homeostasis. CBD has gotten much of its noteworthiness by helping children who suffer from seizures, autism, and even cancer. Hemp health has some societal barriers to overcome, but the evidence of its benefits when it comes to easing discomfort and providing positive mental health is overwhelming. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., #106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251 and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., #3, Altoona, 515-967-4036.



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## HEALTH

By Elijah Evans

# MENTAL time travel

Our minds have the fascinating power to transport our experience forward and backward through time. In memory, we can recall and relive events from our pasts, and, with the ability to forecast and predict, we can peek ahead to our expected futures. These impressive mental feats do come with a price tag, however. While remembering and anticipating are absolutely necessary to function as people, they can also greatly contribute to our suffering. We

can become stuck on certain memories, ruminating on past events and whatever negative emotions with which they are associated. Similarly, we can imagine troubling possible futures that fill us with anxiety and dread. For many, this struggle is a key factor in staying mentally healthy. Having the ability to come back to the present moment, through skills like mindfulness or immersion in sensory experience, are important ways in which we can prevent getting too caught up in either the future or the past. Managing our mental time travel is a lifelong skill, but, if you are finding it too difficult to develop on your own, there are professionals who can help you develop the necessary skills to feel more in control of where your mind takes you. ■

Information provided by Elijah Evans, TLMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322, 515-528-8135, [evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com), [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com).



## COVER your bases with the 4 most under-consumed nutrients

Most of us know that people require water, protein, carbohydrates and fats to stay alive. But essential vitamins and minerals are just as important in human functioning even if they are needed in smaller amounts. In fact, potassium, fiber, calcium and vitamin D are considered nutrients of public health concern because low intakes are associated with chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure.



So, let's make sure you are covering all the bases when it comes to your nutrition.

- **Potassium.** Potassium deficiency can cause real concerns if you are active in sports, these include muscle weakness, fatigue, and a risk of high blood pressure.

It is important to your muscle function, nerve function and balance of fluids like water in your body to intake enough potassium. The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines recommend that 14- to 18-year-old females consume 2,300 milligrams of potassium a day and 14- to 18-year-old males consume 3,000 milligrams.

Pork is an excellent source of potassium. A 3-ounce serving of pork provides 11% of your daily needs. Other foods high in potassium are sweet potatoes, orange juice, leafy greens, yogurt and fresh fruits like bananas, cantaloupe and grapefruit.

- **Fiber.** Consuming fiber promotes bowel health and helps regulate blood glucose levels. It also may help with weight control because you'll feel full. Deficiencies can result in constipation and a higher risk for diabetes and heart disease. High school females should be consuming about 25 grams of fiber a day, while high school-aged males should be consuming 31 grams.

The best sources of fiber are found in fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans and whole grains.

- **Calcium.** Increased amounts of calcium are significant to those who are still growing and developing, and that applies to most teens. High schoolers should be consuming 1,300 milligrams of calcium every day.

Calcium is important to bone health, as well as playing an important role in muscle contraction and transmitting messages through the nerves. This will be the last time in your life that you can build bone health proactively.

If you are not eating enough calcium, your body will take calcium from your bones to ensure proper cell function, and that may lower your bone mass. High sources of calcium are found in dairy products like cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese, as well as dark green vegetables and calcium-fortified cereals.

- **Vitamin D.** Like calcium, vitamin D is also important to bone health. When vitamin D and calcium work together, they can make bones strong and healthy. A deficiency of vitamin D can lead to the development of soft bones when you become an adult. High schoolers should be consuming 600 IU of vitamin D daily.

High sources of vitamin D are found in fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines. You can also eat vitamin D-fortified foods such as milk, yogurt, dairy, juice and cereals. ■

Article written with help from our friends at the Iowa Pork Producers Association. Information provided by Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD, corporate dietitian, Fareway, 6005 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, 515-252-9962.

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# OPEN House

Altoona Edencrest at  
The Tuscany held an  
open house June 8.



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Middleswart



Marvin Lee Shoemaker and Jessica Clark



Ninion Landy and Norman Mckeever



Gene Alust and Allen Warden



Berine Mells and Carol Grimm



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## PRE-PLANNING is a gift

If you knew that you only had a short time left to convey important information to your loved ones, what would it be?

Would you tell them you love them? Tell them that you are proud of them? Talk to them about important life decisions? Care for financial obligations?

As I anticipate retirement at the end of June, this may be my final opportunity to share with you. First, I want to say how thankful I am for the privilege of working with families here at Highland Memory Gardens. Many have had the sad responsibility of burying a loved one; others have taken the time to prepare for their own future burial needs; still others have asked questions as they anticipate treading into the unknown territory called death.

What else would I tell you? One of the greatest gifts you can give your family is pre-planning for your own future burial needs. Pre-planning will allow your family to grieve at the time of your passing instead of being forced to make difficult decisions.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you, whether in person or through this publication.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■



Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.

# Prearrange

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## ABOUT skilled care choices

As you know, life doesn't always go according to plan. A fall or accident can happen at any time. Maybe you, your spouse, or maybe a parent has sustained an injury and has had to go to the hospital. The physician recommends skilled care to get strong enough to go home. How do you decide where to go? What are your options? What choices do you have?



The first thing to consider is your insurance. Medicare Part A covers your skilled stay days 1-20 at 100% for each benefit period. Starting on day 21, there is a co-insurance cost per day. If you have a Medicare replacement plan, you may have fewer options of skilled rehab facilities to choose from. With a Medicare replacement plan, you'll need to make sure your preferred community is in network. A preauthorization is often required, which can slow the discharge process down. Nearly all skilled rehab communities are able to quickly admit a patient with Medicare Part A.

Many skilled rehab options across the metro are capable of providing therapy seven days a week, in both the morning and afternoon. You are the deciding factor of where you or your loved one would like to discharge from the hospital to. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have a requirement that you must receive options for a skilled stay. No one should be making a statement such as "we are sending you here" or "this is where you need to go." The choice and authority to make that decision is yours alone. Don't be afraid to ask for options and call around to communities you may be interested in.

Any skilled rehab program will have to review and accept you or your loved one, but you can request your information be sent for review to any rehab center. No one is able to determine where you can or cannot go, as that decision is yours and dependent upon the requirements and availability of the skilled rehab community. If you are in a situation where you feel like you are not given any options, remember to ask for them.

Do your research and decide on what is best for you and your family. Reach out to different skilled rehab programs and ask questions. There is always someone to help you with the process. It's important that you feel comfortable with the community or center where you or your loved one will be staying. Be informed, do your research, and feel good about your healthcare choices. ■

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.

# LOVE your community

You know, I can't think of a better topic to discuss this month than loving your community. When your small town sees record commercial development and a surge of downtowners or out-of-towners moving to the burbs, it can sometimes be difficult to "connect," right? Where do you start?

Well, from a Chamber perspective, you dip your toe into the volunteer pool. The opportunities are endless. For summertime fun, you could volunteer to help the Altoona Historical Society with the newly established Fourth of July Parade ([Shawntel@IowaRealty.com](mailto:Shawntel@IowaRealty.com)) or sign up to help at Caring Hands Outreach Center in its food distribution center donation sorting or in their thrift store, Second Hand Treasures ([Miriamc@caringshandsiowa.org](mailto:Miriamc@caringshandsiowa.org)). You could help with the Summer Meal Program through Southeast Polk CSD ([Amy.ahearn@southeastpolk.org](mailto:Amy.ahearn@southeastpolk.org)) or spend some time with the Kids Café peeps (check out their FB page for more info). Get knee deep in your church and teach VBS or join its choir. Do you have mowing and trimming skills? Like to hang out at the ballpark? Jump in and volunteer to help with field maintenance and the concession stand with the baseball or soccer folks. Step up and lead a committee for Altoona Palooza! Shoot, you can even come and hang out with the Chamber at our July Golf Outing at Terrace Hills or National Night Out at Sam Wise Sports Complex. In order to really "live" in a community, you need to get into its inner workings and be involved. (And I don't mean by griping on the community social media pages...smh.)

At the last city council meeting, we said good-bye to councilwoman Elizabeth Burns-Thompson. She is the perfect example of what can be accomplished when you step outside of your comfort zone and really invest in the community you live in.

EBT came to us (and by us, I mean the Chamber) several years back as a new resident and asked, "What can I be involved in?" We immediately assigned her to help with the packet pickup for the then, ever so popular, Nippy Hippie 5K we ran. She was super fun, and this became an annual thing for her to do. She became that face in the crowd while passing out T-shirts and packets (she had a dynamite smile), and she was making connections. Before we knew it, she got involved with Altoona Palooza, the Wine & Craft Beer Fest and the Altoona Young Professionals. She was a passionate leader, and she loved this town. It wasn't long before she got the call to serve in a bigger way: We asked if she would consider running for city council. She liked the idea, went door to door for months meeting people, and she was elected. Suddenly, she was no longer just a resident or volunteer, she was making a real impact on the community, and she loved it. That is a Cinderella story. That could be your story. C'mon now, dip your toe. ■



Information provided by Melissa Horton, Executive Director, 119 Second St. S.E., Suite A, Altoona, 515-967-3366, [melissahorton@altoonachamber.org](mailto:melissahorton@altoonachamber.org).

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# FARMERS Market

Altoona Farmers Market was held June 1.



Allie Rhodes and Ashley Young



Kelsey Evans and Nathan Evans



Ashley Liepa



Lacey Hamil, Laila Buchan, Casie Briggs and Randy Hamil



Talula Schetzle and Sara Todd



Aleigha Moore, Phil Simmons, Robert Lees and Miriam Cody



Maycee Sanford, Olivia Adams, Matt Adams, Dylan Adams and Libby Adams



Audrey Lyons and Hannah Lyons



Mike Sandor and Julie Sandor



William Borchard, William Borchard and Heather Borchard



# CUSTOMER Appreciation

Altoona Bankers Trust held a customer appreciation event June 7.



Lisa Baker, Kathy Quick and Michelle Beem



Quincy Lohman, Meghan Meyer and Meredith Holton



Jim Debartolo, Helen Debartolo and Lori Slings



Chris Ytzen and Faith Barker



Michelle Beem and Andi Summy



Katie Ryan



Anna Davitt and Marissa Herrin



Mary Simon and Pat Simon



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2 1/2 BATH  
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1 BATH  
893 SQFT

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**\$619,000**

5 BED  
3 BATH  
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**\$389,500**

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1 & 2(1/2) BATH  
1,433 SQFT

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**\$275,000**

3 BED  
1 & 2(1/2) BATH  
1,326 SQFT

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**\$145,000**

2 BED  
1 BATH  
976 SQFT

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**\$480,000**

4 BED  
2 BATH  
1,752 SQFT

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**\$373,000**

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2 BATH  
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4 BED  
1 & 2(1/2) BATH  
1,612 SQFT

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**\$328,000**

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3 BATH  
1,422 SQFT

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