

INDIANOLA

FEBRUARY 2024

# Living

MAGAZINE

## Golden EMPLOYEES

Retirement-age workers  
share why they continue  
to report for duty

**Meet Cori Stanley**

EDUCATION

**100 Women Who Care is building  
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# WHAT IS INCAPACITY PLANNING?



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We recommend an Estate Plan for all adults. We have been involved in messy litigation and family feuds when there is no plan. It gets expensive and causes extreme stress on families.

You should also consider Incapacity Planning. This involves a plan for a situation if you become incapacitated and need a trusted individual to assist you in handling your financial and/or medical affairs.

## **Financial Power of Attorney**

A Financial Power of Attorney is a contract between you and a trusted person to handle some or all of your financial affairs when you become incapacitated, based on a doctor's opinion. You can put limits on the types of transactions that can be handled, or you can broaden the scope to other person to handle all financial affairs. The person appointed as the POA has a fiduciary duty to put your interests first and act accordingly, on your behalf. If you pass away, the person you appoint no longer has powers to act on your behalf.

## **Medical Power of Attorney**

In Iowa, we refer to this as a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Decisions. It is similar to the Financial Power of Attorney. This document allows you to designate a person or persons to make health care decisions, if you are unable, due to your condition.

## **Advance Directive or "Living Will".**

A Living Will is not the same as a Last Will and Testament. A Living Will is a declaration that if you have an incurable or irreversible condition that will result in death within a relatively short period of time or a state of permanent unconsciousness, you do not wish to prolong the administration of life-sustaining procedures.

This is intended to give you a general understanding of Incapacity Planning. You should always talk to an attorney to assist with these decisions and to further explain the legal effects. Next month, we will provide some basic information regarding Estate Planning.

**WELCOME**

## WHAT'S next?

Five years ago, retirement wasn't even a thought in my wandering mind. Today, at age 55, it's becoming more of a reality. Not next week, next month, next year or likely even the next decade, but it's coming around the corner, sooner than I may realize.

I enjoy my job, and I like to work. Those are good things. At this point, it is difficult for me to imagine what I would do to fill my day if I wasn't working. I don't particularly enjoy traveling, I am not old enough to golf, and I would likely drive my wife crazy if I was around the house too much. I have a feeling many of you who are reading this can relate, in one way or another.

With the labor force in short supply, many opportunities abound for retired people who still want to work. Part time. Full time. Employee. Contractor. As a retired person in today's world, you can take your pick of jobs. In years past, this age group was highly desired among many employers, as those in it were quite often dependable and experienced. The COVID-19 scare changed this, as many retired folks who had come back to work opted to not do so any longer. This created a massive employment gap for many businesses that continues to exist today. Little by little, some seniors who are willing and able are coming back to the workforce. That's good news for everyone.

We have been fortunate in our business to have many folks who are past the traditional retirement age continue to contribute to our company. Some have written stories. Others have sold advertising. And many deliver publications for us. We are grateful and appreciative of the work those in the past have done and those currently continue to do. If I am blessed with good health and a sound mind in my later years, I hope to be able to do the same. And in a few decades, I might even take up golf. Maybe.

Thanks for reading. ■

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VETERAN OWNED



# Golden EMPLOYEES

**Retirement-age workers  
share why they continue  
to report for duty**

**By Becky Kolosik**

Retirement has long been considered a person's greatest achievement after a lifetime of working. Many people look forward to this time in their lives to travel, pursue hobbies and, of course, spend more time with family and friends. For some, working after retirement makes it possible to enjoy the benefits of being retired while still living comfortably. It's a personal choice that can offer big benefits for physical and mental health. Read about Indianola residents who say working — whether part-time, full-time or on a consulting basis — is a great way to boost income, stay sharp, keep busy and fulfill a passion or purpose in their lives.

Throughout her banking career, Eileen Thompson has focused on building relationships with customers and the community, and she plans to keep doing that as long as she is able.



## Busy as a bee

For many years, Gerald Knoll and his wife, Barb, would stop into Busy Bee Garden Center in the spring for plants and garden items, and the staff would often say, “Gerald, you are going to work here when you retire... we have a spot for you.”

Today, Gerald is a familiar face at Busy Bee, working 40 hours per week when the garden center starts prepping for the season and then dropping back to one to two days per week after the first of June.

For the Knolls, retirement was not the end of the road. Like many other retirees, they found it to be the start of another amazing chapter in their lives.

“We always knew that, when we retired, it would be a chance to do more things we truly enjoy,” says Barb. “We also knew that someday we’d have the opportunity to give back in ways we simply couldn’t when we both worked full-time.”

The couple has called Indianola home since the 1970s. Gerald managed Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) for 20 years before taking the helm as executive director of the National Balloon Classic. He worked at the Classic for eight years and eventually landed at American Enterprise Insurance Company for the remainder of his career.

Barb’s first job was at Scandia Savings and Loan before making a move to the law firm of John Davis and William Baker, who were the attorneys for the savings and loan. David Elkin joined the firm several years later and, when Baker retired, Barb continued working for Elkin.

In the fall of 2021, both Gerald and Barb were tossing around the idea of retiring. When they met with their financial advisor, he asked the question about retirement, too. When they told him they just weren’t sure if it was the right time, he reassured them there was no reason they couldn’t. So, they both decided to officially retire at the end of that year.

“Being retired means I am beholden to no one except God, my wife, and myself,” Gerald says, laughing. “But I knew that, even though I was retiring, I wasn’t done working.”

Busy Bee is a dream part-time gig for Gerald simply because he loves being able to share his passion for, and knowledge of, plants and gardening with customers. The growing season starts mid-to-late February when the garden center gets plug trays in and starts filling pots



For Barb and Gerald Knoll, retirement has given them the opportunity to share their interests and passions through part-time work, volunteering and giving back to the community.

and planting. Then Busy Bee staff works to get retail set up in the greenhouses, plus there is maintenance work and repairs that need done, and Gerald tackles some of that.

Once the retail season starts, Gerald works mostly in the vegetable section, as well as trees and shrubs.

“I’m there to help wherever needed,” he says. “It’s always fun to help people find what they are looking for and talk to them about gardening, planting — and even canning and preserving. I have my own garden and do all of those things, so I love to share information and swap recipes once in a while.”

After her retirement, Barb planned to still work for the law firm on a part-time/as needed basis.

“I don’t have a set schedule,” she says. “I go into the office when needed and do the book work from home. It’s a win-win because I can help them out and also keep my mind sharp.”

What the couple loves most about this time in their lives is the ability to share their skills, passions and expertise — not only through their work, but also through volunteering at their church, The Helping Hand and with other local organizations.

When they are not working or volunteering, Gerald still finds time to work out, hunt and tend to his own garden, while Barb enjoys coffee with friends, working out, traveling and doing crafts.

## Banking on It

When Eileen Thompson visited businesses this year to drop off TruBank calendars, many people said, “I thought you retired?” or “Oh, you’re back!”

“There were lots of smiles,” says Thompson. “So many of these people are good friends and customers that I have built strong relationships with. Those connections last a lifetime.”

You can’t really say that Thompson “is back” because she hasn’t really left. She’s held the title AVP of business development since 2009, and, although her official retirement was Sept. 30, 2020, she’s still a familiar face around the community at events TruBank sponsors. She also still goes into the office part-time.

At age 17, Thompson never dreamed that she would eventually celebrate more than 50 years in banking. When she was a senior at Southeast Warren High School working part-time at the original Peoples Trust and Savings Bank, Bill Buxton offered her a job before she even graduated.

“I said, ‘Mr. Buxton, you know I haven’t even finished high school yet,’ ” she says, smiling. “He responded by saying, ‘I’m not worried... we’re pretty sure you will.’ ”

When she started at Peoples Trust and Savings full-time, Thompson was involved in many areas of the bank’s operations for more than 30 years — including supervisor of bookkeeping/accounting, ordering and

managing bank supplies and managing the day-to-day operations of the in-house computer system. She learned by doing.

The bank went through several acquisitions, each coming with a name change. Thompson took on different roles, continuing to learn and grow along the way. In 2009, she was ready to make a change and met with Keith Welling at what was then Community State Bank. She was hired as the AVP of business development and quickly hit the ground running, working with existing and prospective customers. She offered banking services, prepared proposals and traveled to the bank's branch offices as needed.

"I loved everything about my job and going to work every day," she says. "Developing those trusted relationships was key, and it also allowed me to get involved with many different community organizations and meet so many wonderful people."

In 2017, Thompson could have retired but decided to instead work part-time. When COVID hit in early 2020, she couldn't call on businesses, and her day-to-day duties changed significantly. She started to consider officially retiring and eventually did on Sept. 30.

Today, Thompson is still actively involved in the bank's activities. When the new main office was preparing to open, she worked on the safety deposit boxes, helped out where needed, and gave tours of the new building at the grand re-opening. She and her husband, Stan, are familiar faces who stop and say hello to everyone they know at events like the National Balloon Classic, Friday Night Live, community parades and more. Perhaps her new title should be director of hospitality.

Thompson doesn't have a set schedule and can work whenever she wants. Now that she and Stan are great-grandparents, it certainly makes it easier to travel more and spend time with their great-granddaughter and family. They also enjoy snow-birding in Arizona.

Meanwhile, Thompson hopes to be involved with TruBank for as long as she can.

"I often tease Keith that I just might come back to work full-time," she says, laughing.

His response? "Pick your new office."

## A labor of love

Growing up, Kathryn Wright's father taught her the importance of hard work and learning new skills.

"I learned from him that the more things I knew how to do, the easier it would be to handle any situation thrown at me," she

says. "It also made it easier to transition into something different when needed."

Wright has done many things throughout her adult life. A couple of her early jobs were with hospice and at an airfreight company when she moved to Los Angeles. When she and her husband came back to Iowa in 1980, she focused on being a stay-at-home mom.

In 1985, the Wrights settled in Indianola and have called it home ever since. That's when her venture into business ownership started — first with Kathryn's Tearoom on the square.

Her dad had wanted to start a tearoom, so that was her inspiration.

"I traveled to England with my sister-in-law and explored all the different teas, as well as the traditions surrounding English tea times," she recalls. "I enjoyed taking everything I learned back with me and re-creating those experiences here."

When she closed the tearoom after six years, Wright still had her other business, "Catered by Kathryn," providing catered meals for high profile individuals and events in the Des Moines area, including for then-Governor Branstad, the Des Moines Metro Opera, and many other companies and organizations. She continued catering up until she took her current job at The Village, A WesleyLife Senior Living Community in December 2019.

Working at The Village wasn't something she had considered until a friend suggested she apply. Looking back, Wright now sees how it "was all a part of God's plan." Her mother had recently passed away from dementia. The grief of that loss, coupled with the fact that she was not able to care for her mom in her final days, weighed heavy on Wright's heart.

"I've always been one to take care of others," she explains. "My heart was broken, and I didn't realize how much working at The Village would start me on a path to healing."

As a resident assistant in Oaks Assisted Living, Wright found several "mamas" to care for that filled the hole in her heart. On a daily basis, she prepares breakfast, provides light housekeeping and laundry service, serves lunch and also passes out medications and/or assists with activities of daily living as needed.

"You grow to love each and every one of the residents," she says. "It makes me feel good to know that they trust me and need me. I want them to know I'm here and will take care of them."

Wright likes to bring in homemade cinnamon rolls and other baked goodies to



Kathryn Wright has found not only purpose, but personal healing by taking care of assisted living residents at The Village.

share with the residents. She also bakes a cake for each resident's birthday celebration and gives them a gift.

After COVID, she saw how isolation had affected residents' socialization, so she started "Chat with Kathy" on Wednesday afternoons in an effort to get them out of their apartments.

"I always bring a homemade treat or dessert," she explains. "At first we played games, but as they got reacquainted with each other again, it's now more of a time to talk and laugh together."

Wright has also brought her Pomeranian dog named Tootles to visit. Tootles enjoys the attention she gets and has even been found snuggled up and napping in a resident's apartment.

Working full-time has given Wright something to look forward to each day — and it keeps her busy both physically and mentally. However, she's looking forward to retiring by the end of the year so she and her husband can do more things together — particularly traveling.

Regardless, she still plans on being a familiar face in the Oaks, volunteering when she is able.

"Working here has truly saved my life, and I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have made a difference in people's lives," she says. ■



# GARDEN tasks for February

February, that interesting month between the cold, dark, frigid temps of January and the warming breezes, melting, and bright days of March. What to do in the garden? Many of us are ready to get outside and begin to emerge from winter hibernation, but what can we do in this "in-between" month?

Take a walk around the garden, check out your beds, trees and shrubs. Look for damage from rabbits, voles and deer. If you find damage on trees and shrubs that you may not have protected last fall, take time to put chicken wire cages around those damaged trees and shrubs now, and make a note for next year to be sure to protect them. Check any late plantings of perennials, shrubs and trees for possible frost heave. A new layer of mulch spread around these will help keep them safe until spring.

While you are out, now is a good time to prune trees and shrubs while they are dormant, but do not prune any spring bloomers, since you will be pruning off this year's blooms. These include lilacs, magnolias, redbuds, azaleas and rhododendrons. However, maples, oaks, and other non-flowering trees are great candidates for pruning, since you can see the structure of the tree without leaves.

And while you have your pruners out, gather some stems of pussy willow, red twig dogwood and forsythia to take in and force into bloom indoors for a bright color burst. Bonus, these stems will often begin to root in water, and you will have starts to plant out this spring or share with friends and family.

There are things to do indoors as well. Remember the elephant ear bulbs, canna and dahlia tubers you dug up and put in storage? Now is the time to inspect and make sure they are still looking good. If you find any that are getting soft spots or showing decay, throw them away. Some loss is normal during storage. It also gives you a chance to buy some new varieties this spring (wink).

Starting seeds for your gardens this spring? Now is the time to gather your supplies from trays to medium to the seeds themselves. Check out the nurseries, garden centers, catalogs and internet for really interesting new and different seeds. Remember some of those cool flowers and veggies can be entered into the Warren County Fair the end of July.

Did you bring in any pots with plants that are marginally hardy into the unheated garage? Check and see if the soil is drying out. If they need some moisture, go out and gather some snow. A layer of 2-3 inches placed on top of your pot will slowly melt and provide a little moisture to get through until spring rains arrive. No snow? Use ice cubes.

Take the opportunity this month to get outside again and begin enjoying your garden, and have fun in the garden dreaming of those sunny and warm days of spring and summer just around the corner. ■



Information provided by Barry Laws, co-owner, Quilted Gardens Nursery and Landscaping, 19635 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-720-3089, [www.quiltedgardens.com](http://www.quiltedgardens.com).

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# EARNINGS for all seasons

While nature offers four seasons, Wall Street offers only one — four times a year. It's called "earnings season," and it can move the markets. So, what is earnings season and why is it important?

Earnings season is the month of the year that follows each calendar quarter-end month (i.e., January, April, July and October). It is the time during which many public companies release quarterly earnings reports. Some public companies report earnings at other times during the year, but many are reported on the calendar year that ends Dec. 31.

## Reported earnings

To understand the importance of earnings, we need to remember that the value of a company can be tied to the amount of money it earns. Some companies don't have earnings, and they are valued based on their potential rather than



their current earnings.<sup>1</sup>

Wall Street analysts maintain a close pulse on a company's quarterly report to help estimate future earnings. For example, these estimates may guide investors in determining an appropriate price for a company's stock. Remember, though, a company is not permitted to discuss interim earnings with select individuals; earnings reports must be disseminated publicly to level the playing field for all investors.<sup>2</sup>

## An inside look

When an earnings report is released, it tells the market two things.

First, it offers an insight into how the company is performing and what its prospects may look like over the near term.<sup>2</sup>

And second, the report can serve as a bellwether for similar companies that still have not reported. For instance, if the earnings of a leading retailer are strong, it may offer an insight into the earnings of other retailers as well as other companies that similarly benefit from higher consumer spending.

## What time?

Earnings reports are generally released when the market is closed in order to provide market participants adequate time to digest the results. Earnings reports may move markets. If earnings diverge from the expectations of professional investors and traders, then price swings — up or down — may be significant. Such a divergence is referred to as an "earnings surprise."

If you are a "buy-and-hold" investor and feel confident in a company's long-term prospects, earnings season may mean little to you, since short-term results may not impact your long-term outlook. However, earnings reports can be meaningful if an earnings shortfall reflects a structural problem within a business or represents the continuation of a downward trend in earnings. ■

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## LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

# LEGAL liability and causation



To recover damages in a tort claim against another, one must not only prove that the other party was at fault, but also that that fault was a cause of the damages sustained.

In other words, it is possible that a party can be completely guilty of outrageous conduct but not be liable if it is not proven that such conduct actually caused the injuries or damages at issue.

**Cause – defined:** In cases that go to trial in Iowa, the jury is often instructed that the conduct of a party is a cause of damage when the damage would not have happened except for the conduct. If there is evidence that more than one cause may have contributed to the injury or damages, the jury will be instructed that there can be more than one cause of an injury or damages.

Typically, the jury is asked to answer two questions in the affirmative to establish liability. The first question is, "Was the defendant at fault?" The second question is, "Was the fault of defendant a cause of any item of damage to the plaintiff?" The jury may also be asked whether the plaintiff was at fault and/or was the cause of damages.

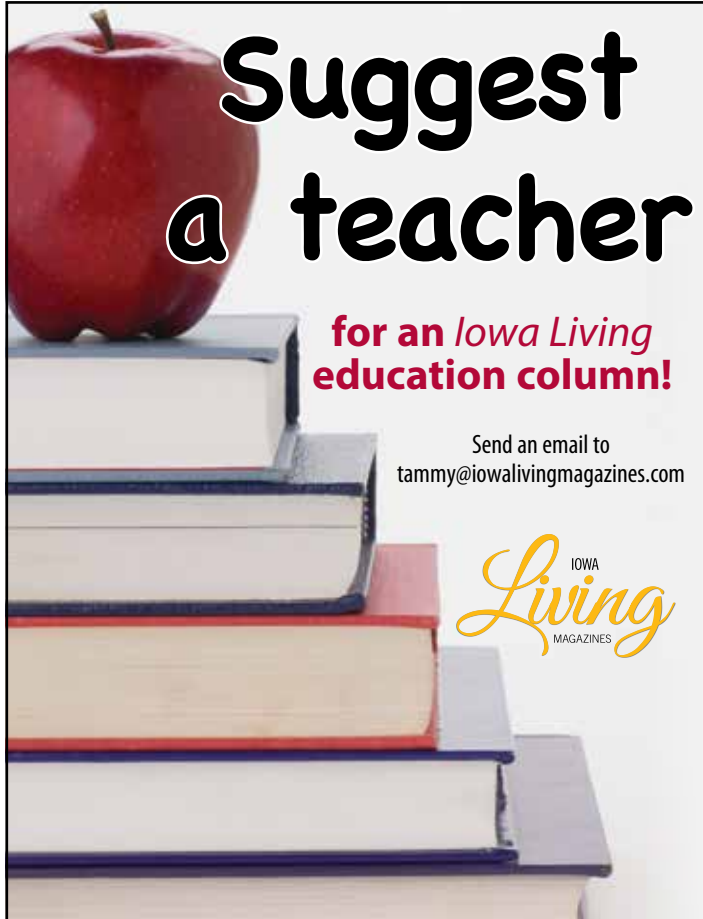
As a practical matter, in most personal injury cases, the focus will be on whether there is a preponderance of the evidence that the injuries and damages would not have occurred "but for" the negligent (or tortious) conduct of the defendant. The burden is on the plaintiff to present actual evidence to this issue. Failure to do so will result in no recovery.

**Scope of liability:** In the case of *Thompson v. Kaczinski*, 774 N.W.2d 829 (Iowa 2009), the Iowa Supreme Court adopted what is known as the Restatement (Third) of Torts concerning the scope of liability. Under this authority, in some cases, the jury may also be asked whether the claimed harm is within the scope of the defendant's liability. Simply stated, the question concerns whether the harm arises from the same general types of danger the defendant should have taken reasonable steps to avoid.

The jury may be asked to consider whether repetition of defendant's conduct makes it more likely harm of the type plaintiff claims to have suffered would happen to another. If not, the harm is not within the scope of liability.

Although this newer wrinkle may not apply in many cases involving personal injury litigation, it has created some interesting legal discussions and appellate decisions. Conclusion: To obtain a recovery in a civil case, it is not enough to simply show that the defendant was at fault and that damages occurred. Causation must be proven to establish liability. ■


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



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## HOW COMFORTABLE are you with investment risk tolerance?

Knowing your risk tolerance as you approach various stages of life and during economic uncertainty is important to understand. It is also beneficial to review with your financial advisor regularly. Can you



withstand losses when the market is performing poorly? Staying the course may be hard on investors' nerves during the years we see high market volatility and downturns, yet it leads to a healthier outcome for investors' portfolios rather than pulling completely out of the market.

Adjustments can be made at any time to your risk tolerance. Risk adjustments help absorb some market risk while still allowing growth in your portfolios. Taking on more risk when you are years from retirement, as you have more time to recover from market dips, is the standard. The closer you get to retirement, the shorter amount of time you have

to recover from those market dips. If you are nearing, or currently in retirement, your needs shift from putting money into your portfolio and watching it grow to generating income from your investment portfolios. As retirement approaches, you may want to dial back on your investment risk level depending on how soon you anticipate needing to use those funds in your portfolios.

Risk adjustments are also common during economic uncertainty. If you are thinking of pulling out of the market, it may be best to discuss scaling back your investment risk tolerance before doing so.

In 2020, we saw periods of economic growth and low interest rates, where the amount you earned on cash investments was limited, and market risk lead to great returns. In 2022, interest rates increased, and economic growth became uncertain. Savings accounts and cash became more attractive with higher returns while the market experienced new lows. Now, in 2024, we are expected to see interest rates start to decrease. Cash investments may become

less attractive, but we may be able to experience new market highs.

The market's overall performance is positive over the long run, but you can expect to see steep downward swings, major upswings, and plateaus along the way. Timing the market and waiting for its next major upswing or market crash is an extremely challenging task to predict. Data shows that time in the market beats trying to time the market. Discuss your comfort level with investment risk with your financial advisor by adjusting the mix of assets in your portfolio. ■

For more information, please contact Kourtne Klocko with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Disclosure: 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.

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## Welcome to Medicare Seminar

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 5:30-7 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Volunteers with the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) offer this free seminar for persons approaching age 65. Learn about Medicare Part A & Part B, Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage and Part D drug plans. RSVP required, call 515-962-5375.



## Tunes & Treats: Flying Silos Duo

Tuesday, March 26, 1 p.m.  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

The Flying Silos are a fun and entertaining duet who perform blues, rock, pop and country, with their set list spanning Adele to Zeppelin charts. The free concert is hosted by Indianola Parks & Recreation, with dessert provided by Indianola Hy-Vee.

## Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Do you help take care of an adult with chronic conditions? If so, you are not alone. More than 43.5 million family caregivers in America provide a vast array of emotional, financial, nursing, social, homemaking and other services on a daily or an intermittent basis.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational series designed to provide tools you need to take care of yourself. If you take good care of yourself, you will be better prepared to take good care of your loved one. As a participant, you will learn how to: reduce stress, improve self-confidence, better communicate your feelings, balance your life, increase ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources.

Iowa State University Extension is sponsoring Powerful Tools for Caregivers in Indianola this March/April. Classes consist of six, 90-minute sessions held once a week every Friday beginning on March 22. Classes will be held at the Indianola Wellness Campus from 10-11:30 a.m. There is a \$40 fee for the program. To register, contact the Warren County Extension office at 515-961-6237 or Karie Foster at 641-660-2725. You can also register online at <https://go.iastate.edu/QH3TVO>.



## People's Bank Indoor Play Date

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Children ages 1 year through preschool are invited to burn off some energy at the playground on Wednesday mornings. From a bounce house to riding toys, blocks, crafts and occasional special guests, this program is free for everyone to enjoy through the sponsorship of Peoples Bank. All children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult throughout the morning.



## Master Gardener Training

Classes are Feb. 26-May 3  
Application deadline is Feb. 12 to apply for spring session

The Iowa Master Gardener Program is a year-round volunteer service organization that utilizes university-trained volunteers who use research-based horticulture and gardening knowledge and practices to educate people and coordinate projects that promote healthy communities. Topics include tree planting, plant diseases, growing vegetables, houseplants, integrated pest management, composting, pollinator gardening and more.

Registration can be completed via [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener) or by stopping at Warren County ISU County Extension office, 200 W. Second Ave., Indianola. For more information, contact Bethany at 515-961-6237 or [bcecot@iastate.edu](mailto:bcecot@iastate.edu).

## Dome After Dark

Fridays, 6-10 p.m. through March  
Des Moines Botanical Garden,  
909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Enjoy the conservatory and gardeners show house which will be illuminated with unique and colorful lighting. Details at [dmbotanicalgarden.com](http://dmbotanicalgarden.com).

## Des Moines Art Center exhibit

Through Feb. 18: "Double Take"  
4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines  
[desmoinesartcenter.org](http://desmoinesartcenter.org)



Check for cancellations



## Sixth Annual Super Bags Tournament

Feb. 11

Smash Park, 6625 Coachlight Drive, West Des Moines  
[smashpark.com/location/west-des-moines](http://smashpark.com/location/west-des-moines)

You honed your skills during tailgate season. Now it's time to see if you've got what it takes against the best bags, or cornhole, players in the metro area at Smash Park. Registration begins the day of at 9 a.m.

## Des Moines Performing Arts productions

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines  
[dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org)

- Feb. 6-11: "Company"
- Feb. 15: Capital City Pride Presents: Brea Baker
- Feb. 17: The Peking Acrobats
- Feb. 20: Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
- Feb. 27 through March 3: "Les Misérables"
- Feb. 27 through March 17: "Dixie's Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull"

## Iowa Beef Expo

Feb. 10-18

3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines  
[iowastatefairgrounds.org](http://iowastatefairgrounds.org)

An entire week of beef packed into the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Parades, shows, sales and banquets, all in the name of Iowa beef.

## Iowa Wolves

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines

[iowa.gleague.nba.com](http://iowa.gleague.nba.com)

- Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Rio Grande Valley Vipers



## CITYVIEW Chocolate Walk

Friday, Feb. 23, 5-9 p.m.

West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

Like chocolate? Like chocolate drinks? Then you'll love this event. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. Attendees will also be provided tickets for chocolate dessert samples at participating retail stores. A shuttle bus from Majestic Limousine will be providing transportation to each location, although most are only a short walk away. For a link to purchase tickets, visit [chocolatwalk.dmcityview.com](http://chocolatwalk.dmcityview.com). ■

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# ELIZABETH S. Cooke

Election disagreements might seem to be happening more frequently, but, in reality, fake news and voting challenges have been a problem for a long time. For example, in 1875, Elizabeth S. Cooke was elected superintendent of the Warren County Schools. There was no question about who had received the most votes. But her opponent, H.A. Huff, raised the question "Can a woman legally hold the office of superintendent of public schools?"

The trial lasted three days. H.A. Huff's attorneys opened the case by claiming that Miss Cooke was not eligible to hold the office because she was a woman. Miss Cooke's attorneys argued that a woman is not prohibited by statute from holding office. Her attorney continued by maintaining that "government cannot restrict the right to hold office, and, while all citizens are not voters, there is a clear distinction between voters and those voted for."

Miss Cooke won her case but still could not serve because the decision was appealed to the Circuit Court of Warren County. W.H.

Schooley, associate judge, in a dissenting opinion, had much more to say on the topic. Schooley wrote that the statutes did not need to specify that only men could hold office because, at the time the statutes were written, it was universally understood that only men could hold office, so it was not necessary to include the word "male."

Schooley added that common law restricted women to administrative offices which have responsibilities adapted to a woman's sex. The duties of the county superintendent involved activities for which a woman was not peculiarly fitted. "The meagerness of the pay compels her to travel alone and unprotected." She would be exposed to the mercy of "vagabond tramps" and would need to protect herself alone among "all classes of society."

Unfortunately, the circuit court of Warren County overturned the decision of the lower court, ruling that Miss Cooke was ineligible for office on the grounds that she was a woman. The circuit court also ruled that Mr. Huff was ineligible for the office because he had not

received a majority of the votes.

This case was headed for the Iowa Supreme Court, but the 16th General Assembly was meeting and solved the problem. A law was passed and signed by the governor stating that no person who may have been or shall be appointed to the office of school superintendent or director shall be deprived of office by reason of sex. Since the law was made retroactive, Mr. Huff ended up having to pay all expenses for both sides and lost his first year's earnings as superintendent.

After completing two terms as county superintendent, Miss Cooke spent four years as principal of the Indianola High School. She moved to Oregon for a while, and, when she returned to Indianola, she married Rev. William Martin in 1888 and assisted him in writing a history of Warren County. She served as dean of women at Simpson College from 1911-1915 and learned to read and write Braille at the age of 81 when she began losing her eyesight. She died in 1940. ■

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# POWER in numbers

100 Women Who Care is building a stronger community.



100 Women Who Care drew 96 women to the group's informational meeting late last summer. Since then, more than 100 women have committed to making a difference in the community over the next year.

When a group of women has a mission to make a difference, nothing will stop them. Not even sub-zero weather and 2 feet of snow. On Tuesday, Jan. 16, women of all ages and stages of life gathered at The Village for the second meeting of 100 Women Who Care. Members enjoyed light refreshments and social time, but the main goal of the evening was to provide a donation to a local nonprofit, and the result was nothing short of amazing — a \$12,000 gift to Indianola Preschool.

Alysha Martin lives and works in Indianola and also serves as a chamber ambassador. She came up with the idea for 100 Women Who Care after attending a ribbon cutting where 100 Men of Norwalk presented a check to Short Years Partnership.

"I immediately started thinking about how we could bring something similar to Indianola — for women," Martin says. "I immediately began researching and found several 100 Women Who Care chapters across the state, including Ankeny."

Martin met with the founder of the Ankeny chapter and learned more about how they started. She enlisted help from Chamber President Amanda Zwanziger to form a steering committee. They were looking for influential women in various sectors of the community who had strengths on which they could capitalize.

Committee members include Ashley Noethe, Gina Piper, Karey Bishop, Heidi Levine, Ardene Downing, Paula Chew, Kami Haynes, Zwanziger and Martin.

They decided to kick off with an informational meeting to answer questions and formulate a plan. There were 96 women in attendance. At their first official meeting in October 2023, they raised \$11,300, which was given to Kiya Koda.

100 Women Who Care follows up on their Facebook page after each meeting to promote not only the recipient of the grant, but also the two other organizations that were nominated.

"Women have a heart to give their time and resources," says Martin. "Most don't have \$10,000 but can give \$100 every quarter, and that, combined with the other women, adds up to an amazing amount."

The chapter started with a goal of 100 women, and they already see the need for larger local event spaces as the group grows.

"All women are welcome, and we will not put a limit on the number of members," says Martin. "If we grow to 200, that just means an even greater impact." ■



At the Jan. 16 meeting, Kiya Koda received a check for \$11,300, which will help them kick-start their campaign for a new shelter. Holding the check, from left, are Kiya Koda Director Julie Skellenger and Alysha Martin.

## How 100 Women Who Care works

One-hundred women commit to gathering once per quarter to make a significant impact on the nonprofits that serve Indianola.

Each woman commits to \$400 per year for charitable purposes which can be paid in advance or \$100 at each meeting.

Nonprofits are nominated at each meeting; three are drawn at random, and the woman who nominated gives a 5-minute presentation on why the organization needs/ deserves the donation.

All paid members vote for the nonprofit they feel is worthy, and the chosen organization receives the \$100 donations as a no-strings-attached grant with the goal being at least \$10,000.

If you are a woman interested in joining, or a business/ individual looking to sponsor a meeting, email Alysha Martin at [100womenwhocareindianola@gmail.com](mailto:100womenwhocareindianola@gmail.com). ■

# HEART health is ear-risistible

You're likely thinking about relationships with Valentine's Day around the corner. Did you know there is an important partnership within the body that helps keep your heart and hearing happy?

February is American Heart Month, and you're probably familiar with the importance of cardiovascular health. According to the CDC, almost 610,000 people in the U.S. annually die from heart disease.<sup>1</sup> What you might not be aware of is the link between the cardiac and auditory systems. Good blood flow helps you maintain your hearing, and damage to the blood vessels in your ears can result in hearing loss. One study of older adults in the U.S. found that those who had experienced heart failure were 11% more likely to have hearing loss.<sup>2</sup>

## What's the reason for this correlation?

The hair cells in the cochlea translate noises into electrical impulses that the brain interprets as sound, and it relies on proper blood flow to do so. Poor circulation deprives these cells of oxygen, which causes them to become damaged or destroyed. These cells do not grow back, so inadequate blood flow can result in permanent hearing loss. It can also

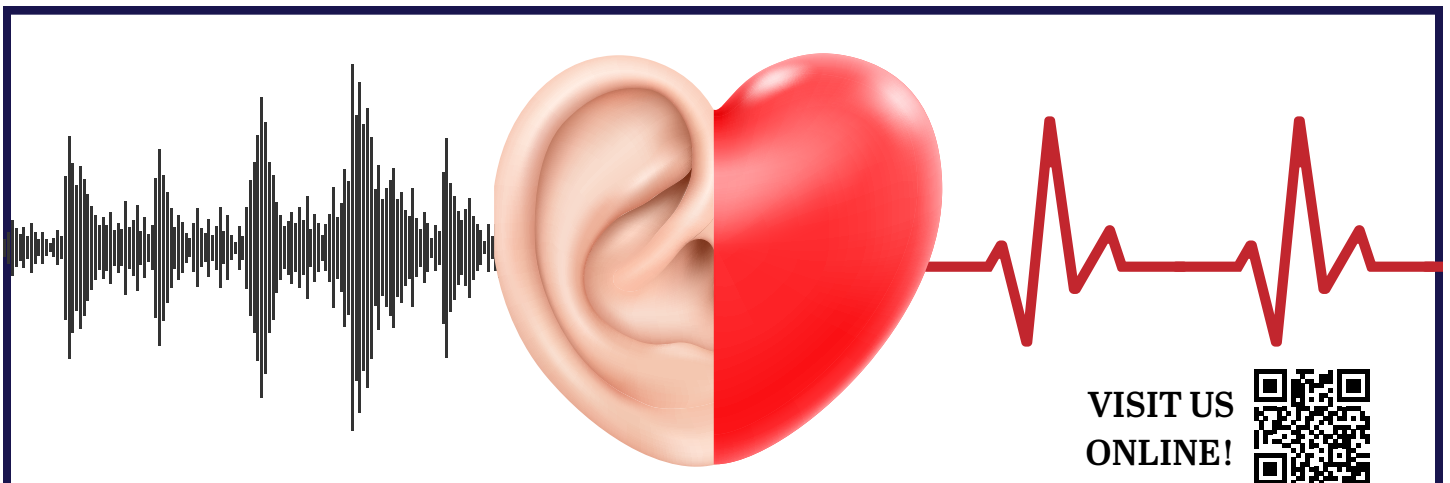


lead to tinnitus or ringing in the ears.

Hearing loss doesn't just affect your health — it can also impact your relationships with the people around you and make it difficult to hear well wishes from your valentine. One way you can protect your hearing is by taking steps to keep your heart healthy, such as cardiovascular exercise and a healthy diet.

If you already know you have some form of cardiovascular disease, it's time to have a real heart-to-heart with an audiologist about getting a hearing evaluation. ■

If you suspect hearing loss, please contact Iowa Hearing Center at 515-416-5990 to see how our trusted hearing health care providers can help you. We offer thorough audiological testing and counseling for total patient satisfaction. Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, [www.IowaHearingCenter.com](http://www.IowaHearingCenter.com). 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, October 14). Heart disease facts. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>. 2 Sterling, M. R., Lin, F. R., Jannat-Khah, D. P., Goman, A. M., Echeverria, S. E., & Safford, M. M. (2018, March 1). Hearing loss among older adults with heart failure in the United States: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *JAMA otolaryngology-- head & neck surgery*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5854543/>



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Patients report that acupuncture has helped them with reducing their cholesterol, improving inflammation markers, improving osteopenia, and regulating blood sugars and blood oxygen levels. Now we have research supporting these observations by our patients.

## How does chiropractic care help preventively?

Chiropractic care is effective by adjusting the spine, which can relieve tension on the nerves that innervate the muscles and, more importantly, the organs. Regular adjustments help with flexibility, decrease pain, improve sleep, and decrease inflammation. Chiropractic care can also increase mobility in all of the joints of the body.

## How does massage help with disease prevention?

Massage can help by reducing stress, decreasing

pain, and improving the lymphatic function and blood circulation. Touch is also an important part of our wellbeing.

## How does yoga and meditation help preventively?

Both yoga and meditation work on breathwork, help with decreasing and coping with stress, decrease pain, and help with movement and flexibility.

All of these medicines will help encourage and support you on your health journey. Find the healthy choices that work for you. If possible, keep a routine that keeps you on track and will evolve with you as your health changes and improves. ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAc, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-808-1548, call or text.

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## HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

### NAVIGATING seasonal depression

CBD, or cannabidiol, has gained widespread attention for its potential benefits in addressing anxiety and depression. Research shows that CBD interacts with the endocannabinoid system, a complex network of receptors in the body, which plays a crucial role in regulating mood and stress responses.



Several studies, such as one published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, indicate that CBD has anxiolytic (anxiety-reducing) properties. The compound influences serotonin receptors, impacting the brain's neurotransmitter levels associated with mood regulation. This contributes to the reported calming effects observed in individuals using CBD.

Moreover, a review in the *Neurotherapeutics* journal highlights CBD's potential in managing various anxiety disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety disorder (SAD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Research, such as a study in the *Journal of Chemical Neuroanatomy*, proposes that CBD also has antidepressant effects by interacting with receptors involved in the regulation of mood and emotions.

While more research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms and long-term effects, these findings indicate that CBD holds promise as a natural option for individuals dealing with anxiety and depression. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. References: 1. Blessing, E. M., et al. (2015). Cannabidiol as a Potential Treatment for Anxiety Disorders. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 2. Campos, A. C., et al. (2016). Cannabidiol rescues acute hepatic toxicity and seizure induced by cocaine. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*. 3. Sales, A. J., et al. (2019). Cannabidiol Induces Rapid and Sustained Antidepressant-Like Effects Through Increased BDNF Signaling and Synaptogenesis in the Prefrontal Cortex. *Journal of Chemical Neuroanatomy*.

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## HEALTH

By Lance Andersen

### GET LOST — in a daydream

*"How will you go about finding that thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you?" — Meno.*



This may seem like a philosophical question, but it appears just as important for every individual to answer today as when it was first said in ancient Greece. Wishing others to "get lost" could be well intentioned, because getting lost can cause what was unfamiliar to appear. "Lost" comes from the Old Norse "los," and one translation is "falling out of formation." This implies it's an action rather than a state of being.

Good news is you can access the expansive blue from anywhere thanks to the power of your mind. Daydreaming stimulates creative innovation in the brain's right hemisphere but also activates the hippocampus, which suggests this could help improve learning and memory. Somewhat paradoxically, daydreaming about recent events helps cement them into memory, so the wandering mind is perhaps never lost. If daydreaming sounds lazy, call it "quiet wakefulness," which is a relaxed state of environmental awareness that helps us process things when we are both awake and at rest. Without it, we may never have heard of Einstein. It's up to you to find what "flow state" helps spontaneous connections in your brain. It's clear from MRI scans that your brain is very active during daydreaming, but how active is it at other times? ■

Information provided by Lance Andersen, LMSW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd., 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com), [andersen@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:andersen@sstherapyandconsulting.com).



## ZINC and...wrinkles?

Over the last few years, there have been several people noticing that their neuromodulator treatments for wrinkles (Botox, Dysport, Xeomin, Jeuveau, Daxxify) haven't been working as long and don't seem as effective. But why? Zinc deficiency could be to blame. Neuromodulators need zinc in order to work correctly. Studies have shown that supplementing with zinc can help your neuromodulator work faster and longer.



Neuromodulators aren't only used for aesthetic reasons. They can be used for migraines, excessive sweating, tremors, muscle tension, and many other reasons. So, not only is it important to get the best benefit for vanity, but for relief of medical issues as well. Those who took 50mg zinc daily noticed a 30% increase in duration of their neuromodulator and noticed a faster onset.

Zinc isn't available in only oral form. It can also be injected into muscles or even through an IV for better absorption. If you've noticed your medical or aesthetic tox not working as long, consider zinc supplementation and talk to your trusted professional to get your best results. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1016 Main St., Norwalk, 515-850-7848, [www.vividlifespaspa.com](http://www.vividlifespaspa.com).

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## PREVENT winter weather damage to your home

The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) reports that the most common types of home damage due to winter weather are:

- Roof damage or collapse due to snow
- Frozen pipes
- Ice dams

When you know that a severe winter storm is on its way, the IBHS recommends the following last-minute actions that you should take to protect your home and your family:

- Monitor the weather via TV, radio, computer or cell phone. Listen for terms like "winter storm," "winter weather," "blizzard" and "wind chill." Remember, a watch means be prepared; a warning means take action.
- Prevent your pipes from freezing by setting your thermostat no lower than 55 degrees F, opening cabinet doors where piping is present, and, in extreme cold weather, letting all faucets drip.
- If you have an ice dam prevention system, turn it on before the snow starts to fall.
- Ensure you have plenty of supplies. ■



Information provided by Mike Richey Agency Inc., American Family Insurance, 204 E. Detroit Ave., Indianola, 515-961-8889, [mrichey@amfam.com](mailto:mrichey@amfam.com).

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# TRUE love

It's February, and love is all around us. A person can't walk through any store and not be surrounded by pink and red decorations to remind us to buy something for the one we love. And what is the universal symbol of that love? The heart, of course. The way we communicate our love is through the symbol of a heart, to remind people they are in our hearts because we love them.

This year has a wonderful coincidence. Not only is Feb. 14 Valentine's Day, as it always is, but it also happens to be Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the penitential season of Lent.

Part of the traditional Ash Wednesday service is for people to come forward and be signed with ashes. Coming forward is a way that we publicly admit that we are fallen human beings. We have not done what we should do, and we have done things we should not have done. To express our sorrow for our sin, we come forward and receive ashes, which is an ancient ceremony for expressing sorrow.

As the pastor puts ashes on the repentant, he does so in another symbol that conveys a powerful love as well: the cross. In the cross, God has forgiven our sins for Jesus' sake. The cross is what true love for mankind looks like. ■

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



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# A FATHER'S legacy

Chevy Nova drives old and new memories for Bendon/Hagen family.

Anyone who was lucky enough to call Dale Hagen friend knows he was a gentle, kind, easy-going guy.

"Dad had a great sense of humor and always appreciated hearing or telling a good joke," says his daughter, Katherine Bendon. "But he also deeply cared for people and took the time to get to know

everyone — whether out in the community, at church or in his courtroom."

As a judge, Hagen was calm and measured. However, when the topic of cars came up, he got excited.

"Growing up, I often remember encountering a long line of classic cars driving down the highway," says Bendon. "Dad would quickly try to name every car's year, make, model, barely being able to get the words out fast enough."

Hagen could also provide a full history of every car he owned as well as any life events or stories tied to them. One car was a 1963 blue Chevy Nova SS he bought new as a young 20-something.

Hagen loved the Nova but sold it to purchase a more "practical" car to drive back and forth from Aberdeen to Sioux Falls when he started dating Julia, whom he would eventually marry. Years later, he began searching for another Nova. With the help of his court reporter and friend Jeff, he found a red one.

Hagen drove his Nova every chance he could. Whether it was a quick errand to the store or a leisurely drive around town, one of his favorite lines was, "Should we drive the Nover over?"

"Dad often took the Nova to church and gave rides to kids waiting around while their parents visited after service," says Bendon, laughing. "If it was their first convertible ride, that was even more fun for him."

Aside from cars, Hagen's second love was ice cream, so a trip to Dairy Queen in the Nova was the perfect combination. He had easily mastered driving — without power steering — while eating an ice cream cone or Heath blizzard.

In 2015, Hagen passed away before having a chance to share the thrill of the Nova with his grandchildren. After the funeral, it returned to the Hagens' garage. Bendon's husband, Joe, took it out periodically — sometimes taking their kids (now 11 and 7) for rides, driving it in parades or making sure the other grandkids got a ride when they were in town to visit.

Eventually, it seemed fitting for Bendon's mom, Julia, to officially pass it down.

"We love having the Nova... it's a fun way to keep Dad's memory alive and to share stories and pieces of his life with our kids and their cousins," says Bendon. "Every year on his birthday, we take the Nova for a ride if the weather is good and get ice cream to celebrate and remember him." ■



The Bendon sisters, Jocelyn, 7, and Annabelle, 11, pictured with their parents, Joe and Katherine Bendon, will grow up hearing stories about their grandfather and making sure his legacy "drives" on.



## RECIPE

# A BETTER-FOR-YOU breakfast favorite

*(Family Features)* Whether you're encouraging loved ones to start a new wellness kick or looking to add new ideas to an already-nutritious menu, families at any stage of a journey toward better health can use newfound favorites to bring fresh flavors to the table.

Start by ramping up your family's breakfast with these slightly sweet mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping for a protein-packed way to start the day with a healthy addition of fresh berries. This dish from Milk Means More provides a delicious breakfast that allows you to bring everyone together for a tasty, nutritious meal no matter the occasion. Dairy foods, like the low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt found in this recipe, are fundamental to good nutrition.

Constructing a better-for-you menu calls for a balanced diet with a variety of foods to get essential nutrients. This balance is important for maintaining healthy gut and immune function while optimizing overall wellness.

Find additional better-for-you recipe inspiration at [MilkMeansMore.org](http://MilkMeansMore.org). ■

## Mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping

*Recipe courtesy of Marcia Stanley, MS, RDN, culinary dietitian, on behalf of Milk Means More*  
Total time: 25 minutes

Servings: 6

### Topping:

- 1 3/4 cups plain Greek yogurt (fat free, 2% or 5%)
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

### Pancakes:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt (fat free, 2% or 5%)
- 1/2 cup milk (skim, 2% or whole)
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- oil
- 1 cup fresh blueberries or chopped fresh strawberries

### To make topping:

Stir yogurt, syrup and cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate.

### To make pancakes:

In mixing bowl, stir flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In separate bowl, whisk egg, yogurt, milk, butter and vanilla. Add yogurt mixture to flour mixture. Stir just until combined (batter should be slightly lumpy).

- Scrape batter into large plastic food storage bag. Oil nonstick griddle or large nonstick skillet. Heat over medium heat. Cut off about 1/2 inch from corner of plastic bag. Squeeze batter, about 1 tablespoon at a time, onto hot griddle. Cook 1-2 minutes per side, or until pancakes are golden brown, turning to second sides when bubbles form on surface of pancakes and edges are slightly dry.
- Serve warm pancakes topped with cinnamon-maple yogurt and sprinkled with berries.



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# CHAMBER Dinner

The Indianola Chamber dinner was held at Simpson College Hubbel Hall on Friday, Jan. 19.



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# CHAMBER Dinner

The Indianola Chamber dinner was held at Simpson College Hubbel Hall on Friday, Jan. 19.



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# MEET Cori Stanley

Working for students, teachers and the community.

Cori Stanley, who moved to Indianola as a toddler, considers herself a “Townie,” and she loves this place she calls home. Being engaged and building positive relationships with students, families, and her colleagues is something she thrives on — not to mention being involved in as many ways as possible. Perhaps it’s her way of giving back to the community that gave so much to her growing up.

As a second-grade student at Hawthorne Elementary, Stanley had an amazing teacher, Sandy Johnson.

“There was something special about the relationships she had with each student,” Stanley recalls. “Because of her, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. I had many other great teachers throughout middle school and high school that continued to fuel that fire.”

She earned her undergraduate degree at Simpson College and her postgraduate from Drake University. After four years in Beaverdale at Holy Trinity Catholic School, Stanley considered it a privilege to come back to Indianola and teach sixth-grade English/Language Arts (ELA). She eventually moved to seventh-grade ELA and currently is an instructional coach at the high school.

As she reflects on her teaching style, the influence of her elementary teacher shines through.

“I had high instructional standards but was able to create those important connections with students, helping them to achieve academically,” she says. “I was also able to communicate with parents, collaborating with them on the best ways to work with their children.”

Stanley decided to make a change in 2021 after 18 years in the classroom. She was interested in other opportunities in the district that held leadership responsibilities, and instructional coach seemed like a great fit.

She works with the high school teachers — sometimes with instruction or helping those who are struggling with a particular class of students. She also researches teaching strategies, collects classroom data and develops new curriculum.

“It’s about collaboration and being a thinking partner with the teachers,” she says. “They have goals for what they want to achieve in the classrooms — for themselves and their students’ success — and I am there to help. I also support the district’s new teacher mentoring program.”

Stanley is a wife and mom of two. She enjoys spending time with family, working out and coaching at CrossFit Undone, walking her dogs, and reading. She’s found many ways to serve the community outside of the classroom and enjoys being an active board member with Indianola Dollars for Scholars and serving on the Junior Class Post Prom Committee. ■



Cori Stanley has a long list of mentors who have influenced her teaching career and says she has learned so much about herself — and life in general — from her many students over the years.

# SHAKE free from the burdens

Winter in Iowa can be both beautiful and brutal. I choose to live here. It happens every winter, and there is no other place I would rather live. Even still, winter can be really hard for relationships, for community, and for our mental health. Consider how difficult the months of pandemic lockdown were and realize winter is a shorter version of the same thing. A separation from people and our need for community and togetherness. Weeks without a smile, an encouraging word, and without growing together.



Recently I noticed a tree covered in snow, drooping and folding under the weight, ready to snap. Barely holding on with no relief until the next thaw. Other trees can’t come along to knock the heavy snow off, or stand under failing limbs to lift them up, or provide resources to ensure lasting life and maturity. It is a tree left alone, in the cold, heavily laden with the weight of the world, and, without care and attention, it will bend, break and likely never be the same.

Life tends to throw a lot of heavy and frigid stuff on us. It is easy for us to fall and fold under the weight of so much. Maybe just one more thing that day or that week would cause you to snap like the limbs on the tree. We crave and we need community. We need to share and love together, disciple and encourage each other. We should help one another shake off the heavy and embrace the warmth of God’s Word, singing praises to God together, and shining the light of Jesus Christ in each other’s lives.

God created community and, in the Book of Colossians, encourages us, “Bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts” (Colossians 3:13-16 CSB).

Let’s gather together and shake free from the burdens and weights of today. Let this be the weekend you come back to church or, for the first time, join with believers in worship and learning about God’s faithfulness and holiness. Don’t wait for the next thaw or the seasons to change. ■

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



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