

WAUKEE

FEBRUARY 2024

# Living

MAGAZINE

# Golden EMPLOYEES

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

**Meet Megan Madden**  
EDUCATION

**Sebben sends thousands of letters to veterans**  
NEIGHBOR SPOTLIGHT

**Mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping**  
RECIPE

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3. **Forward-Facing Harness Seats:** Transition to a forward-facing harness seat with a five-point harness once your child outgrows the rear-facing seat. Make sure the harness is snug and positioned at or slightly above the child's shoulders.
4. **Booster Seats:** Use a booster seat for older children who have outgrown the forward-facing seat. A booster seat helps position the seat belt correctly over the child's body, providing better protection.
5. **Seat Belt Fit:** When transitioning to a seat belt, ensure that it fits properly. The lap belt should lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt should cross the chest and shoulder, not the neck or face.
6. **Avoid Bulky Clothing:** Remove bulky clothing, such as winter coats, before securing a child in a car seat. Bulky clothing can compress in a crash, creating slack in the harness and reducing its effectiveness.



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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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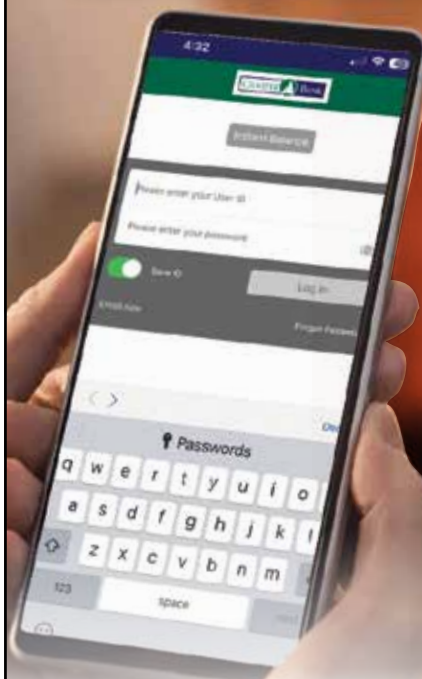
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# Golden EMPLOYEES

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

**By Jackie Wilson**

The vision of what life is like “after retirement” is as unique as each individual. For some, that vision focuses on leisure: traveling to warm beaches, afternoons spent reading, extra rounds of golf, more time for hobbies, friends and families. For others, however, employment continues to be an important aspect of their lives. From those who continue full-time careers to those who put in a few hours to keep busy, work can be a key part of life after retirement age.

Karen Passig of Waukee began working at Waukee Hardware and Rent-it Center when she was in her late 70s. She is one of five employees over the age of 60 working there. Photo by Jackie Wilson



## Five retired employees

Take a stroll in the Waukee Hardware and Rent-it Center store and you will find employees ready to assist customers in finding that one “thingy” for the bathroom faucet, a gadget for a broken hinge or the right-sized screw for the project.

When customers arrive, employees ranging from ages 16 to 93 will assist them.

Waukee Hardware currently employs five post-retirement folks, working mostly day shifts. Karen Passig is one of those employees who began working at the hardware store more than three years ago. At age 82, she points out that she’s not the oldest person who works there.

“Bob Tressel — he’s 93, and he’s worked here for 31 years,” she says.

Passig was a computer science professor at a college in Dubuque until she retired at age 60.

After retirement, she moved to Waukee to be closer to her adult kids, grandkids and great-grandchildren. Passig volunteered at the congregate meals site. Then, due to the COVID pandemic, the church stopped providing the meals, so she searched for something else to do.

“Bob told me about an opening at the hardware store, so I came and applied. I knew they hired retired folks,” she says.

After moving to Waukee, she’s worked different local jobs, but she’s stuck with the hardware store.

“I really like working with customers and my coworkers here,” she says.

Her job consists of operating the cash register, cleaning and assisting customers with finding items. With thousands of unique items,

she continues to discover new ones daily.

“I still don’t know where everything is. Geoff (the owner) knows all that,” she explains.

The hardware store also hires teenagers. The different generations share their strengths and get along at the store.

“I think the teens here have a great work ethic. They’ve been taught that. I really enjoy talking with them,” she says.

Passig works a few days a week and likes how the owner is flexible with her schedule,

“I couldn’t ask for a better boss.  
They are so giving in the community.  
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excellent place to work.”

— Karen Passig

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## FEATURE

including time off as needed for appointments.

"I couldn't ask for a better boss. They are so giving in the community. They are great people, and it's an excellent place to work," she says.

Passig plans on working as long as she's able. Her adult kids are supportive of her working.

"All my kids are retired. Now they're just waiting for mom to retire," she says. "They understand I'm a widow and live by myself, so it's nice to get out and communicate with people."

She likes how the job is not as stressful as her previous career was.

"I like getting out of the house. It's not a money thing. I just like to be with people," she says.

### Fareway keeps Williams moving

After a 35-year career at John Deere, Ron Williams retired at age 60. His plan was to continue working in consulting sales for John Deere Financial in Florida during the winter, then return to Iowa in the summer.

He knew he needed to stay busy during the summer months in Iowa. However, mowing



Ron Williams, 81, of Waukee began a second career at the Waukee Fareway store 22 years ago. Photo by Jackie Wilson

the lawn wasn't enough to keep him occupied. As he went to purchase groceries at the Waukee Fareway store in 2002, he ran into the manager, Dan, who was stocking shelves.

"I asked him why he was stocking milk. He told me he couldn't keep people to work," he recalls. "Then he said, 'I'd hire you in a

heartbeat.'"

Williams began work at Fareway in May 2002. He performs several jobs, including stocking shelves, sacking groceries and other courtesy work.

At age 82, he likes to stay engaged in life. His son and granddaughter also work at the

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## FEATURE

same location. He works about 16 hours a week or more during busy times. He not only likes the social aspect of getting out of the house but finds it's a good physical workout for him. Wearing a smart watch, he tracks between 16,000 to 24,000 steps each shift.

"It's one of the ways I stay fit, as it keeps me on my feet moving," he says.

One of the most challenging parts is the busy season with holidays and snow storm prep.

"When there's a lot of deep snow on the ground, it's difficult to push heavy carts through the snow. But it's something that you put up with," he says. "This is actually a breeze compared to when I grew up on a dairy farm."

On the flipside, Williams interacts with numerous friends who are customers.

"Some people I see multiple times in a week. You walk through the store and see people talking and catching up. It's a local icon," he says.

As he takes bags of groceries to folks in the parking lot, he recognizes people daily.

"There are some customers I've seen since I started. I know what cars they drive and their pets' names."

He likes to help mentor his teenage co-workers, sharing with the new employees his own tips and tricks. He remembers an 11-year-old girl who used to shop with her mom and sack their own groceries.

"When she was 14, she got hired here and stuck with it," he explains. "She's a hard worker."

He cites other young employees who got their start at Fareway and



Len Gutshall and his wife traveled after he retired at age 55 from his insurance job. When he was 72, he went back to work as a driver at Shottenkirk Chevrolet. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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returned to the store as a manager.

"They take care of their own and promote if eligible."

Williams admits the job isn't as stressful as his previous career.

"It's important having a place to feel needed or involved with and interacting with people. It keeps you active and motivated," he says.

He doesn't plan on quitting anytime soon.

"I need something to do. It's never about the money," he reflects. "I want to stay physically involved."

## Courtesy driver

As Len Gutshall checks his steps for the day, he's already logged 9,970 steps — and it wasn't from taking a walk around the block or from running errands. During his miles-long trek, he was also paid for his efforts. It's a respectable workout for any person. But for 78-year-old man, it's even better.

His job? Gutshall is a courtesy driver and vehicle mover for Shottenkirk Chevrolet in Waukee. He works about two days a week and fills in as needed. When he was in his

early 70s, Gutshall decided to go back to work after he and his wife traveled extensively for nearly 15 years.

He worked in the insurance industry in the Des Moines area most of his life and retired early at age 55.

"We traveled a lot. That's what our retirement was about. Then, we began to back off travel. I couldn't just sit around all day," he recalls.

Gutshall heard that Shottenkirk hired retired guys as drivers and applied for the job. His driving skills and driving record are both top notch.

"I think they watch that like a hawk. They wouldn't hire you if you weren't a good driver," he says.

Part of his job is to shuttle customers who are getting service work done on their vehicles to and from their homes or place of business. On the drive, he's met many interesting people. Some folks fiddle with their phones, while others engage Gutshall in conversations about the weather, jobs, families and more.

"Not everyone is as talkative as some. I

really enjoy some of the people I've met. I've learned a lot from other people."

One unique part of his job is driving vehicles he typically doesn't drive.

"We'll test drive cars from maintenance. I've driven Corvettes and Camaros," he says.

In between driving or picking up parts, he'll chat with a few of the other retired men. His current job is not stressful compared to his old job.

"I was in IT, supporting IBMs. This is nothing compared to what I was used to doing," he explains. "I have a laid-back, easy-going boss. It's a no-stress job."

Part of the reason he likes his job is the physical benefits.

"Three days last week, I walked over 10,000 steps. It's really a benefit," he says.

The job also gives him purpose and helps keep his social skills up. His wife is happy he's not sitting around the house all the time.

"I started doing this, mainly because I asked myself the question, 'How do you compensate for the boredom of sitting around the home between travels?' This was the answer," Gutshall says. ■

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## ROTH to compete at AL Oratorical Nationals

The Waukee American Legion Post 737 announced that its delegate, Karli Roth, took first place at the American Legion Oratorical State Finals on Feb. 4. Karli will be representing the state of Iowa at the American Legion Oratorical National Finals May 17-19 at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan.

Karli is a 15-year-old homeschooled junior from Earlham. She enjoys speech, music and writing. Her parents are Joseph and Sarah Roth. She has an older sister and three younger brothers. Karli is interested in pursuing a career in music, business or psychology. She says she wants to glorify God and positively impact the world through her life.

Karli says she is thankful for the opportunity to compete in the American Legion National Oratorical Finals.

"I've been truly blessed by the support given to me by so many people in the American Legion," she says. ■



Bob Alpin, James Swearingen and John Parcel of Waukee American Legion Post 737 congratulate Karli Roth on winning the American Legion Oratorical State Finals on Feb. 4. She will represent Iowa at the national competition.

# Thank You!

Dr. Elizabeth Holland

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Regarding taxes, we are taught to look at the year at hand, find the write-offs, pay your fair share, and move on to next year. That's OK during the working years, but, as you get closer to retirement, the key to saving money on taxes is thinking long-term.

We meet with many families and individuals daily who have most of their retirement savings in a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored account.

Some forward-thinking is involved in making the most of this type of account when

you retire. The money in a traditional 401(k) is pre-tax, so when you take distributions, they count as ordinary income. If you have a \$1 million 401(k) and do no long-term tax planning, you could see a \$500,000 tax bill in retirement.

But what if you started thinking about the tax impact of spending that money five or 10 years before retirement? That's when you can start implementing strategies that leave less on the table and put more in your pocket.

One strategy involves converting some or all of that pre-tax money into a Roth account. The year you convert, you pay income tax on the amount rolled over, but you never pay taxes on the money again — not the growth or the qualified distributions. The more time you have before retirement, the more strategic you can be about converting amounts that have less of an impact on your tax situation each year.

If you convert the money, you don't have to worry about the government requiring you to take taxable distributions at age 73. Traditional

401(k)s and IRAs are subject to the required minimum distribution (RMDs) if you don't.

That's just one long-term tax strategy. It's not right for everyone. It would help if you worked with a retirement planner and a trusted CPA to ensure you do it right.

Before implementing this or any strategy, we show the families and individuals we work with the potential tax savings in dollar amounts. That way, they understand precisely how and why they are taking steps that could help them leave less on the table and have more to spend in retirement. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006. Source: Manganaro, John. "When Advisors Have Tax Blind Spots, Clients Leave Billions in Returns on the Table" ThinkAdvisor.com, 17 Oct. 2022, <https://www.thinkadvisor.com/2022/10/17/advisors-tax-blindspots-leaves-billions-in-returns-on-the-table/>

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## ABOUT special needs trusts

Social benefit programs designed to help people with disabilities typically have restrictions on how much money the beneficiary can have.

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Leaving money directly to a child with disabilities will jeopardize the ability to receive any help from means-tested government programs like Social Security's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (Title XIX). A special needs trust can be the answer for parents.

A special needs trust (SNT) can hold money given to or inherited by a disabled individual. Because the SNT owns the assets, the assets are excluded from asset limit tests for



SSI or Medicaid. The trust can fund quality-of-life improvements for the beneficiary not covered by Medicaid. The SNT is also a way to ensure that other family members — like the siblings of the individual with a beneficiary — aren't left with the responsibility and cost of lifelong care.

The SNT must be drafted so that a beneficiary cannot direct distributions from the trust; the distributions must be purely discretionary. There are restrictions on how the money in the trust can be used. There are also reporting requirements to the state. The existence of a trust of any kind must be disclosed for eligibility purposes, but a properly drafted SNT will keep assets excluded from resource calculations.

Most importantly, the SNT must be drafted so that it avoids any Medicaid payback through estate recovery when the beneficiary dies. Standard language that is found in other

trusts (like a typical minor child trust or a revocable living trust) risks making the entire balance of the SNT subject to repayment for Medicaid costs.

Choosing a trustee who can not only manage funds but also predict the needs and challenges of the beneficiary can be tricky. The trustee needs to understand the specific guidelines under which the SNT can operate.

Because every state has its own system for administering disability benefits, the SNT must be tailored to match those state-specific rules. The SNT is a highly specialized legal document that requires knowledge of local Medicaid rules and federal Social Security law. If you have questions, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning and planning for clients with special needs. ■

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

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## SEBBEN sends thousands of letters

Active with Veterans Administration Voluntary Services

Mary Sebben of Waukee is a strong advocate and dedicated volunteer for veterans in the Des Moines metro area.

Sebben currently volunteers for the Veterans Administration (VA) Voluntary Services of Central Iowa in Des Moines. As part of her work, she helps compile and send thousands of letters to veterans. These letters serve as reminders for appointments, medical results and other correspondence regarding VA services.

"We'll send out a thousand letters at a time. One day, we did 1,700 letters," she says. "It's important we get it right so the veterans can get the services they need."

She began volunteering more than 10 years ago with the VA Voluntary Services, working about eight hours a week. She also serves as deputy of the American Legion Auxiliary for the Woodward Post. After joining the auxiliary, she discovered opportunities for supporting the VA.

Voluntary Services also assists with special projects, such as birthday parties for veterans, Christmas gifts to veterans' families and more. A monthly ongoing list of volunteer needs lets people know what volunteer opportunities exist.



Travis Gaule, Edward Jones, presents Mary Sebben with the Neighbor Spotlight certificate.

"It feels good to serve veterans in any capacity," Sebben says.

In addition, the VA also offers services at Southridge Mall, temporary housing for veterans, inpatient dementia care and other vital services.

Sebben joined the Auxiliary because her husband served in the Air Force in the Vietnam War, as well as the Air National Guard.

"He's received excellent care at the VA. Not only through appointments, but he was hospitalized a few times. He's had the best care," she recalls.

She says it's important to serve veterans as they've given up a portion of their lives.

"They (veterans) give a lot time in the service for our freedom. They give up personal lives for four or more years. As families, we need to serve them in any capacity that we can," she says.

Sebben says the VA is accommodating and flexible.

"The VA is always looking to hear from volunteer service organizations to see how they can improve," she says.


The veterans served are grateful for the assistance by the VA and from the volunteers.


"The VA is dedicated to serving veterans," Sebben says. "You couldn't meet a better group of people. They are so humble."

She suggests people volunteer, whether it's for a special project, a one-time event, or an ongoing commitment.

"If you have time on hand, volunteering is well worth it," she reflects. "It makes you feel good when you walk away."


For more information on VA Voluntary services, visit [www.va.gov/central-iowa-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/](http://www.va.gov/central-iowa-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/). For information on the American Legion Auxiliary, visit [www.ialeagon.org/auxiliary](http://www.ialeagon.org/auxiliary). ■


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# SNYDER recalls finding school crush after years

Now 101, he recalls a “blessed” life.

More than a century ago, Richard Snyder, now 101, was born north of Dallas Center.

He was raised, as he describes, in a wonderful home. He grew up on a farm with six brothers and sisters, attending a one-room country school. By the time he was in high school, the family had moved, and he graduated from Van Meter High School in 1941. In school, he had a crush on someone who didn’t even know he existed — a “tall, thin girl with long, black, curly hair” named Lucy. On the farm, he worked hard, and attributed that work ethic to his father.

“Work long hours, tell the truth, and do what you’re supposed to do,” he quips.

This pragmatism is something Richard took to heart. In fact, there was only one time in his life that he was without a job. At the time, Richard was in his 40s, running a gas station while working another part-time evening job to pay the bills. He took a helicopter ride, but when it got 50 feet in the air, it began free falling.

The experience was terrifying.

“You don’t have time to think,” he says, adding that he didn’t have time to even pray. “I was afraid I was going to die. But the good Lord didn’t have a place for me yet.”

The accident smashed his leg and cost him an entire year of work.

“I had very, very little to live on,” he remembers. “I don’t know where I’d be if it hadn’t been for my good parents and other people to help.”

When Richard retired at age 65, he moved back to Adel. Like any new resident, he opened a bank account. The teller at the counter looked so familiar to him — but he couldn’t quite place where he’d seen her curly hair. Later, he asked his sister about the woman’s identity.

“You went to school with her,” she reminded him.

It was his high school crush, Lucy. Richard’s first wife had died years before, and he had been single for a while. So, he went back to the bank to ask Lucy out for supper. At the time, she wasn’t interested. The next time Richard went to the bank, he told her what he didn’t get to tell her years earlier: “I thought a lot of you in school, and you didn’t even know existed.”

She still didn’t remember him. But, after two years, she finally accepted his invitation to supper.

“The rest,” remembers Richard, “is history.”

He says they never argued once.

“Why should we? She had her money. I had mine,” he explained.

The couple traveled all over the South and the West, including Yellowstone and Branson.

After nearly 20 lovely years together, Lucy ended up in the hospital with dementia. In six years’ time and many medical expenses, she died. She was 95 years old.

“She’s still the sweetheart of my life,” says Richard. “I’m ready to be in heaven with her.”

When it was no longer safe for Richard to drive, he told his sister, “My car is yours if you take me to the doctor.” She took him up on it, and now Richard lives in an assisted living community in Waukee. He misses his car, but says he has a blessed life.

“The people here are extremely good,” he says. “They are just like a family to me. I love it here.” ■



Richard Snyder then and now.

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# DALLAS County Hospital year in review

*Submitted by Tom Harmsen, Public Information Officer | Director of Marketing & Foundation, Dallas County Hospital*

Dallas County Hospital had another prosperous and transformative year in 2023, serving some of the most vulnerable patients in our county, and accomplished many endeavors to advance our mission of “high quality, personalized care accessible to all.” Major accomplishments, include:

- Acquisition of a third family medicine clinic in Dallas Center to add to our portfolio of family medicine care close to home, with locations also in Perry and Panora.
- Creation of a separate infusion center inside the hospital, providing a dedicated space for patients to receive infusions, injections, certified wound care, and more.
- Addition of psychiatry to our clinical service lines with the entrance of Dr. Neeraja Kakade to our DCH Family Medicine Perry and Dallas Center clinics.
- Expansion of available days for services in greater demand, including pain management, often for managing chronic skeletal pain conditions.

In 2023, the hospital also provided more than \$1 million in charity care. The Foundation is the 501(c)(3) fundraising arm of the hospital, designed to help the hospital further its mission by helping defray the cost of carrying on our tradition of serving some of the most in need in

our own communities. Last year’s efforts alone assisted the Foundation in funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars into DCH for providing sustenance to further growth and support of our communities.

## Purchase of new equipment:

- State of the art CT scanner
- New furniture for the infusion center
- Sci-fit exercise bike in cardiopulmonary
- Lymphedema chair in 21st Century Rehab

## Community investment:

- Funds to replenish our food and hygiene items in our community blessing box.
- 12 scholarships to support high school and college students pursuing nursing careers.
- This year, we will be contributing toward expenses planned as part of our ongoing surgery renovation and expansion project.

Participation in one of our three annual, signature sponsor events is one way you can help get involved and is one major vehicle for helping raise the funds the Foundation invests back into the hospital and ultimately the communities we serve. ■

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# City of Waukee Bulletin

## FEBRUARY 2024

Find more information on City services, programs and events at [Waukee.org](http://Waukee.org)

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[Waukee.org](http://Waukee.org)



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### Register for Parks & Rec Programs starting March 1!

The 2024 Waukee Parks & Recreation Spring/Summer Program Guide is now posted at [Waukee.org](http://Waukee.org)! We have lots of programs, activities, trips and festivals to fill your spring and summer. Highlights include:

- Waukee's popular festivals/events such as the March 30 Easter Egg Hunt and a two-day Independence Day Celebration July 3-4
- Movies in the Park featuring: "Encanto", "Mission Impossible – Dead Reckoning: Part One" and "Kung Fu Panda 4"
- Youth sports such as Mini Sluggers T-Ball, Parent/Child Blastball and Introduction to Soccer
- Accessible sport opportunities with Miracle League® and Can Play
- Youth camps including All-Star Sports, Art in the Park, Explore the Outdoors, Super Snackers and more
- Youth art classes, nature therapy and babysitter training

- Adult sports and activities including coed softball, sand volleyball, pickleball, yoga, disc golf and bags league
- Adult meal prep parties, bingo and Snacks & Facts opportunities with the Waukee Public Library
- Bus trips to the Circa 21 Dinner Playhouse or to the World War I Museum in Kansas City

Waukee residents can register for programs beginning Friday, March 1 at 8 a.m. at [Waukee.org/Registration](http://Waukee.org/Registration). Non-residents are welcome to register starting at noon on Monday, March 4. View the program guide at [Waukee.org/ParksandRec](http://Waukee.org/ParksandRec). Information about Sugar Creek Municipal Golf Course season passes, events and camps can be found online as well. And, as always, Waukee Parks & Rec shelters, pavilions and ball fields are available to rent and reserve.

## Dates to Know

**Snacks & Facts: Memory Wire Bracelet**  
March 1 at 11 a.m.  
Waukee Community Center

**Bingo (cards for purchase)**  
March 1, 1-2:30 p.m.  
Waukee Community Center





## New Appointments

On Jan. 15, Mayor Courtney Clarke appointed eight volunteers to serve on City boards and commissions, with terms beginning Feb. 1, 2024. The appointees are Emily Schultz to Board of Adjustment; Shelby Klooster to Board of Appeals; Tab Ray, Mackenzie Kaplan and Blake Crow to Park Board; Alex Broderick to the Planning & Zoning Commission; and Jon Eichhorn and Megan Giudicessi to the Public Art Advisory Commission. Thanks to all for their service.



## Spring & Summer Job Openings in Waukee

### City of Waukee

Head to [Waukee.org/Jobs](http://Waukee.org/Jobs) to see a wide range of summer roles. If you love being outside and seeing the results of your efforts, a laborer, grounds keeper or field crew opening could be a great fit. If you enjoy interacting with people and want to gain customer service experience, a concession, clubhouse or recreation program role could suit you. Roles range from 10 to 40+ hours weekly with wages ranging from \$11-21 per hour, depending on position.



### Census workers

The U.S. Census Bureau is looking for field representatives to help all Waukee residents get counted for the special census. Whether you need a job this summer or just feel a strong sense of civic duty, our community needs your help. Ensuring our population is accurately counted can help Waukee access federal funding for important projects, like roads. Bonus – you get to meet more of your neighbors. Training is paid and hours are flexible across days, nights and weekends in June and July. Learn more and apply at [www.USAJobs.gov/job/752213900](http://www.USAJobs.gov/job/752213900) (field rep; \$16-\$26 per hour) or [www.USAJobs.gov/job/772066700](http://www.USAJobs.gov/job/772066700) (field supervisor; \$21-\$27 per hour).

## Do Property Taxes Confuse You?

Join Mayor Clarke for a helpful breakdown of what impacts the property taxes you pay (your home value is only one piece!) and learn how the City of Waukee puts tax dollars to work for the services you depend on for your daily activities. Registration for this free event opens March 1 at [Waukee.org/PropertyTax101](http://Waukee.org/PropertyTax101).

## Enter the Easter Coloring Contest

Help spread some Easter cheer in the Downtown Triangle District. Print a coloring sheet and entry form from [Waukee.org/Coloring-Contest](http://Waukee.org/Coloring-Contest) or pick one up at the Parks & Recreation office. The contest is for all ages (adults too) and runs through March 24. Winners will receive an egg'cellent Easter basket filled with goodies!



## Share the Love Food Drive

Community members are invited to join City of Waukee staff in donating non-perishable foods and home supplies to help our neighbors fill their tables and care for their families. Drop donations at Waukee Public Library, City Hall, Public Safety or Public Works from February 15 through March 15. The City will deliver donations to Waukee Area Christian Services for the food pantry that serves area residents. High need items include rice, pasta, canned fruit and vegetables, cereal, oatmeal, healthy snack items, laundry soap, diapers and baby wipes. Visit [Waukee.org](http://Waukee.org) for more details.



## Seniors and Technology – Learn to Master your Smart Phone

Your next opportunity to get the most from your smart phone is March 14 at 10 a.m. with the Waukee Public Library. In Apple for All: Accessibility for iPhone Users, seniors can learn about accessibility features to help with challenges related to vision, hearing, unsteady hands and memory. While this class will use iPhones as the example, all are welcome as the concepts can be applied to Android devices. Registration is encouraged but not required. Learn more or register at [WaukeePublicLibrary.org](http://WaukeePublicLibrary.org).



### Regular City Council Meetings

March 4 & 18 at 5:30 p.m.  
Waukee City Hall and Zoom

### Easter Egg Hunt

March 30 at 10 a.m.  
Centennial Park

### Curbside Yard Waste Collection Resumes

April 1  
[Waukee.org/YardWaste](http://Waukee.org/YardWaste)

## THE BARN is new home to JAM Basketball Club

Waukee's newest basketball, indoor pickleball center

When Jeremy Trudeau enrolled his kindergarten son, Jalen, in a basketball program in 2009, he wanted him to participate in a competitive program. Since few options for competitive teams existed, Jeremy established the Waukee JAM Basketball Club, initially with just one team.

Today, the Waukee JAM Basketball Club consists of approximately 30 basketball teams from grades 2-11 for both boys and girls. The club has a fall/winter season and a spring/summer session mainly for high schoolers. They also offer basketball clinics, lessons and camps throughout the year. Their unique program touts their dedication to community, families and development.

Over the years, the program used several different facilities for their practices and events, including school gymnasiums, but Trudeau's dream was to have their own facility.

In 2020, during the COVID pandemic, he opened "The Shed" with his organization, Farm Club Sports. The Shed is a small, members-only gym used primarily for basketball skills and training, while members can book individual sessions.

His dream for a court for the club finally came to fruition with the newly-constructed "Barn," located next to The Shed in Waukee. The Barn includes a full regulation-sized wood basketball court for year-round use by the basketball program. Additionally, pickleball and strength training areas will be open to the public.

Trudeau is eager to have a designated home for the program.

"It's been a while, but we're excited to finally have our own place," he says.

While working on his master's degree in 2015, he completed a feasibility study which indicated Waukee, as a growing community, would be able to support a competitive youth program and facility. He also recognized pickleball was gaining in popularity, and the new facility will serve as an asset to the community.

Trudeau has played basketball through the years and explains why he established the program.

"I fell in love with coaching and teaching," he says.

The JAM name refers to music. In college, Trudeau was a DJ and a member of a hip-hop/R&B band with a passion for music.

"JAM is an ode to jamming, as in the music scene," he explains.

JAM coaches are a mix of professional and parent coaches. Trudeau directs the boys' coaches and teams, while former Drake basketball player



Jeremy Trudeau and his son, Jalen, in The Barn, a new facility for the Waukee JAM Basketball Club.

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Amber Thomas directs the girls' side.

Trudeau has coached all grades and levels. He likes how he can take a team and mold it.

"There's a satisfaction in learning how to work together to achieve goals," he says. "Coaching is a muscle like anything else. You

have to exercise it, and you learn a few things as you go."

The grand opening for The Barn is planned for March.

"The community will benefit from the new facility. Waukee is a growing community that

is very willing to support youth organizations."

For more information about the facility, visit [www.farmclubsportsiowa.com](http://www.farmclubsportsiowa.com). For more information about the JAM basketball program, visit [www.waukeejambasketball.com](http://www.waukeejambasketball.com). ■



*I enjoy the small size community here*

and look forward to meeting the new residents and hearing their stories. -Janice C.

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# EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.

## Basic Self Defense & Awareness

Saturday, March 22, 10:30-11:15 a.m.  
Fit & Fierce 515, 724 S.E. Alice's Road, Waukee

This free community event is led by Nora Crosthwaite, a taekwondo master. For registration, scan the QR code.



## Tuesday Night Trivia

Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.  
Central Standard Burgers,  
1222 S.E. University Ave., Waukee

Come one, come all and test out your thinking skills while having a great time. Trivia night is every Tuesday, with featured themed trivia nights once a month. Hosted by Think and Drink Entertainment.

## Elks Pancake Breakfast Buffet, Bake Sale and the Easter Bunny

Sunday, March 10, 8 a.m. to noon  
West Des Moines Elks Lodge,  
2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

The Easter Bunny will be at the Elks breakfast to greet the children and have treats to share. The breakfast buffet includes: biscuits and gravy, french toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and all you can eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. Proceeds support the Elks' Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and veteran support activities.



## Bowling events

Various Sundays, noon to 1:30 p.m.  
Warrior Lanes, 190 S.E. Lauren St., Waukee

Various parties are planned with registration required two days prior. Themes are: March 17, St. Patrick's Day; April 14, Spring Fling; May 12, A-May-Zing; June 16, Summer Kick-Off; July 14, Celebrate America; Aug. 18, Back To School Luau. For more information and registration, visit [warriorlanes.com](http://warriorlanes.com).



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### Dallas County Conservation events

To register for events, visit [www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation](http://www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation), click on "Public Programs" and scroll down to see program descriptions and to register. If you don't have computer access or need assistance, call the DCCB office at 515-465-3577.

#### Eagle Watch

Sunday, Feb. 25,  
noon to 4 p.m.  
Saylorville Reservoir,  
Cottonwood Recreation  
Area

The return of the bald eagle is a conservation success story and a cause for celebration. Gather at the open waters below the Saylorville Reservoir, where these birds historically congregate, to learn about their recovery. Spotting scopes or binoculars are recommended. This program is a joint effort between DCCB, Iowa Audubon and the Corps of Engineers.

#### Wilderness Trail Tales

Monday, Feb. 26,  
7:30-8:30 p.m.  
Hanging Rock, Redfield

Last summer, for the 29th year running, DCCB led a backpacking trek to the 4-million acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness complex in Idaho. Join a group by a fire to view the photos, hear the stories and learn the lessons of the nine high schoolers who hit the trail on this hike. Registration required.

#### Voas Volunteer Day

Saturday, March 2,  
9 a.m. to noon  
Voas Nature Area,  
19286 Lexington Road,  
Minburn

November's Voas Volunteer Day was such a success that DCCB is having an early spring volunteer day as well. The group will use loppers and handsaws to continue clearing an oak savanna area that is overgrown. Children are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Registration required.



### 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 [chocolatewalk.dmcityview.com](http://chocolatewalk.dmcityview.com).

## Just When You Thought We Couldn't Get Any More Convenient

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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Be sure to check for cancellations.

### 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 Performing Arts productions

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

- 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 Wolves home games

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



### Judy Niemack jazz concert

Sunday, March 17, 2 p.m.

Caspe Terrace, 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee

Jazz critic Dan Morgenstern said it best — "If you want to know what  
real jazz singing can be (but rarely is), listen to Judy Niemack." Niemack  
has perfected her beautiful voice, fearless improvisational skills, impressive  
musicianship and exceptional versatility for more than 40 years and on many  
critically-acclaimed recordings. She also enjoys a worldwide reputation as a  
jazz vocal teacher and author of several "must-have" vocal jazz improvisation  
books. Niemack will be accompanied by pianist John DiMartino, who  
appeared at Caspe Terrace several years ago with vocalist Jay Clayton. For  
more information and tickets, visit <https://jazzatcaspe.weebly.com/tickets.html>.

### Class Act Productions

201 First Ave. S., Altoona  
[captheatre.org](http://captheatre.org)

- Feb. 23-25, March 1-3: "The Music Man Jr."

### Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames  
[center.iastate.edu/events](http://center.iastate.edu/events)

- Feb. 29 through March 3: "Always Plenty of  
Light at the Starlight All Night Diner" ■



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# MEET Megan Madden

Students put creativity into fifth-grade projects.

Originally from Lynnvile-Sully, Megan Madden graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in elementary education and a minor in special education. When she originally interviewed at Brookview Elementary School, she says the school was surrounded by cornfields. She came to the Waukee Community School District because it was a growing district that put students as their top priority. Now, she is in her 23rd year with the district and teaches fifth grade at Brookview.

"The people I am surrounded by are wonderful in Waukee and always make you feel supported and valued," Madden says.

"Waukee also does an excellent job supporting teachers with resources and keeping up with the ever-changing growth."

Madden likes working with students at the fifth-grade level because they are fun. She says her students are eager to learn, curious, always questioning "why," and love to talk, which leads to great discussions and deeper learning.

Madden's students participate in a variety of projects throughout the school year. For example, her students participate in an economics curriculum called BizTown, provided by Junior Achievement. During this curriculum, students learn about consumers and producers, applying and interviewing for jobs, and bank accounts. Madden's students also participate in a simulation called Brookview BizTown where they create and sell products to fourth-grade students.

Brookview fifth graders also participate in Leader League, a system for rewarding students who show good leadership skills each week. Another popular and memorable experience for Madden's students is the WWII book club unit. This unit ends with a WWII "museum" full of people from that time. Madden says it is always fun to see the creativity and passion that her students put into these projects. She wants her students to know that she will always be their biggest cheerleader.

"There are many rewards that outweigh the daily challenges. Just a smile or a high five after a student understands a math concept they have been struggling with is always so rewarding. One of my biggest rewards was having a previous student reach out to do their student teaching with me. She is now a colleague of mine here at Brookview. That was a full-circle moment," Madden says.

During the remainder of the school year, Madden is looking forward to the excitement and anticipation her students have as they get ready to transition into middle school. When not teaching, she enjoys supporting her three children in their various activities. Together, they spend many evenings at sporting events. Her family also enjoys cheering on the Iowa State Cyclones, vacationing in the summer, and visiting the farm and lake back home. ■



Megan Madden says she enjoys teaching fifth grade because students are eager to learn, curious, always questioning "why," and love to talk, which leads to great discussions and deeper learning.

# SENIOR LIVING: The advantages of community

Community living for individuals aged 55 and older offers several benefits. Some key advantages are social engagement, amenities and services, safety and security, maintenance-free living and access to healthcare. Community living provides opportunities for increased social interaction and engagement. Residents can connect with like-minded individuals, participate in group activities, and build meaningful relationships, which can help combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Many senior living communities offer a range of amenities and services tailored to the needs and preferences of older adults. These can include fitness centers, swimming pools, libraries, organized outings, housekeeping, transportation services and more, making daily life more convenient and enjoyable.

Senior living communities often prioritize safety and security measures. They may have gated entrances, surveillance systems, emergency response systems, and staff available 24/7 to ensure the wellbeing of residents.

The benefits may vary depending on the specific community and its offerings. It's recommended to research and visit different communities to find the one that aligns with individual preferences and needs. ■

Information provided by Jay Heaton, leasing counselor, Attivo Trail Waukee, 835 N.E. Boston Parkway, Waukee, [www.attivotrail.com](http://www.attivotrail.com).



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## HEALTH

By Dr. Jason Brown

# HOW DIABETES is harmful to your mouth

There are quite a few general health conditions that can manifest problems in our mouths. Diabetes has been one of those problems, affecting nearly 10% of our population and almost two million new cases diagnosed each year. Diabetes is a major health issue due to the fact that it disrupts our body's ability to uptake sugar into our cells from the blood stream to use as energy.



How does this affect our mouths? Having high blood sugar can potentially cause people to have less saliva development, which is our mouth's first line of defense against harmful bacteria that can cause cavities or gum infections. Diabetics are also more prone to having inflamed gums and are at higher risk for periodontal disease, which causes bone loss and can eventually lead to loss of teeth. People tend to have more problems with gum healing and infections in the mouth with untreated diabetes.

What can those living with diabetes do to help prevent problems? Visit the dentist regularly and practice good oral hygiene by brushing at least twice a day and flossing once a day. Eating a healthy diet, getting exercise and taking necessary medications can help keep your blood sugar in normal range for a healthier body and smile. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jason Brown DDS, Timberline Family Dental, 515-644-2264, 2153 S.E. LA Grant Parkway, Waukee. Information gathered from [mouthhealthy.org](http://mouthhealthy.org) by ADA.

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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).



# WAUKEE Library news



## Library empowers patrons to take control of blood pressure

Just in time for National Heart Month, the Waukee Public Library is the latest library to implement the American Heart Association's "Libraries with Heart" initiative. Patrons visiting the library can now monitor their blood pressure at home by checking out kits provided by the American Heart Association's ongoing initiative to create easy-access opportunities for people to learn more about their heart health.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects nearly half of American adults, according to the American Heart Association. Recognized as a leading contributor to heart disease and stroke, hypertension is often referred to as the "silent killer" due to its ability to damage a person's health without any discernible symptoms. The first steps in preventing or managing high blood pressure involve knowing the numbers and making changes that matter.

Kristine Larson, director of the Waukee Public Library, says enriching and enhancing the quality of life for the community is core to their mission.

"We're excited to collaborate with the American Heart Association and offer blood pressure kits to our patrons, hopefully inspiring them to take an active role in their health. Knowing blood pressure numbers, seeking treatment if needed, and learning how to make healthy choices can improve and potentially save lives," she says.

Two blood pressure monitor kits are available for checkout through the Waukee Public Library's Dr. Mayank K. Kothari STEAM Library, with a borrowing period of three weeks and an option to renew twice. Each kit contains American Heart Association materials, including a validated monitor and cuff, instructions for at-home blood pressure monitoring, a guide on how to interpret the numbers, and tips on blood pressure management. If numbers are elevated, the kits also provide a list of local healthcare providers ready to answer questions.

According to the American Heart Association, blood pressure numbers of less than 120/80 mm Hg fall within normal range. People in this category can stick with heart-healthy habits like following a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. Those with elevated or high blood pressure numbers are encouraged to speak with their primary physician immediately to determine their next steps.



## Upcoming events

**Art Gallery Exhibit:** "Nature's Vibrancy," Anna Conway, March-April 2024

## Kids program

**Marker Tie-dye,** Sunday, March 3, 2 p.m.: Drop in to make a simple marker tie-dye craft during this month's Sunday Fun Day at the Library. Registration not required.

## Teen program

**Snacks & Crafts,** Monday, March 4, 6:30 p.m.: Get snacky and crafty or just hang out with friends. Each month, a variety of coloring and craft supplies will be provided for students in grades 6-12 to be creative. This month's activity is making imitation stained glass. Registration required.

## Adult program

**NEW! Roaming Readers Book Club,** Monday, March 11, 2 p.m.: Join the library at The Brenton Arboretum for a discussion of March's book, "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. You'll meet indoors at the Arboretum's Vista Room to discuss the book, then go on an optional walk on one of the trails together (weather permitting). Additional details can be found at [waukeepubliclibrary.org/bookclubs](http://waukeepubliclibrary.org/bookclubs). Registration not required.

## Multi-age program

**Puppy Day Celebration,** Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m.: Families, teens and children of all ages are invited to celebrate our furry friends with crafts, making fleece chew toys, and more. Registration not required. ■

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# BETTER in the pictures

Niemis discover the home they bought needed a major facelift.

What would it take to buy a house over video chat? A location much closer to the kids? A sizeable piece of land? The perfect floorplan? Perhaps a 200-year-old tree on the property? For Waukee's John and Sue Niemi, it took all that — and pressure from a competitive housing market.

"Every home that we liked was sold in 24 hours," said Sue. "They were selling like hotcakes."

Just over two years ago, the couple decided it was time to move from the Chicago area. Their son had been studying at Iowa State University, and their daughter had plans to follow. To be closer to them, the couple began their house hunting from afar. They tried their best to search online and ended up working with a local Realtor. Around Thanksgiving, the couple made the drive to the metro. Their Realtor showed them six houses, but none of them had the appeal they were looking for.

"The Realtor was telling us a funny story, 'We just sold a house to a couple from California. They bought it sight unseen,' " John says.

"They bought it on Facetime," Sue adds. "Who would do that?"

Soon, they would follow in those footsteps. Early one morning, their house was listed online, and they asked their Realtor to go tour it. She took them through the house on Facetime. The couple



John and Sue Niemi did extensive work on their home, including modernizing the kitchen and adding a deck with unique metal cutouts that pay tribute to the 200-year-old tree on the property.

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## WHERE WE LIVE

liked what they saw over the phone and threw in an offer, against five others. After a bidding war and offering above the asking price, the house was theirs.

"The following weekend, we came out for a walkthrough to see what we'd bought," John says. "The pictures look better than in person."

"We liked the flow of it, we liked the layout. But it was an older home. It was 25 years old. It was just tired," Sue says.

It was not long before the couple realized they would have to repair, replace or redo almost everything in the house. They bought a project when they only wanted to paint a few rooms. The following spring, John moved out to the home full-time for about six months before the rest of the family followed. He and two hires worked to completely overhaul the upstairs and make it livable. But the work was far from over.

One of the couple's favorite projects was the deck. While John and their son worked on building it, Sue was searching for something visually appealing to add. She stumbled upon a Canadian company that laser cuts steel plates. To pay homage to her over 200-year-old "tree of life," she ordered the custom designs. To complete the project, John mounted the plates within the deck railings.

Their most recent and biggest transformation was the kitchen. The project included resizing the island, doing their own tiling work, redesigning and installing new cabinets and relocating lights and the refrigerator.

The work is worth it to the couple. It is all about the minute details that make the space more unique to them.

"If it was a house we were flipping, we probably wouldn't care," says Sue. "But because we're going to be living here for a long time, we want to enjoy it." ■



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## 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](https://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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## PLAN AHEAD

By Sarah Masteller

### WHY would I prepay funeral expenses?

Preplanning one's final arrangements is something that everyone should do. While it is not necessarily an easy topic to address, having arrangements in place can provide a great deal of peace of mind, both for the person making the arrangements and for those loved ones who will be left behind.

No one comes through the doors of the funeral home on the day that their loved one has died and regrets that the plans have already been made. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Families experience great relief knowing that plans are in place, decisions have been made and, perhaps, the expenses have already been handled.

While prepaying funeral expenses is never a requirement for someone to place their arrangements on file with a funeral home, it is an option available and one that you should know about.

There are many benefits to prepaying funeral expenses. Most importantly, it allows a person the opportunity to purchase funeral arrangements at current prices, with the guarantee that those services and merchandise selections will be provided, at no additional expense to the family, at the time the funeral home's services are needed.

Keep in mind, funeral arrangements will never be less expensive than they are today.

Whatever your funeral home of choice is, make sure you understand your options, and then make the decision that is right for you. ■

Information provided by Sarah Masteller, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Southtown Funeral Home, 5400 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines, 515-697-3679



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By Kristen Shelton and Amanda Kramme

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SALE PRICES GOOD FEB. 1-FEB. 29, 2024

**MAYTAG®**



\$2,799  
- \$300  
In-Store Rebate  
**\$2,499**  
TOTAL

**25 Cu. Ft. French Door Refrigerator**  
PowerCold® Feature  
Fingerprint Resistant  
LED Lighting  
MFI2570FEZ

**MAYTAG®**



\$899  
- \$125  
In-Store Rebate  
**\$774**  
TOTAL

**Maytag Range.**  
5.3 cu. ft. oven.  
5 burner. Steam  
clean. MER4600LS

**MAYTAG®**



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- \$200  
In-Store Rebate  
**\$1,099**  
TOTAL

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With Evenair™  
Cooling Tower  
21 Cu. Ft.  
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