

WEST DES MOINES  
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APRIL 2024

# Living

MAGAZINE

# The gift of a future

Residents share their stories  
of organ transplants

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WELCOME

# IF YOU have a heart...

Like most of you reading this, I have not had to deal with organ failure or the need for organ transplants. I am quite thankful for that.

Like many of you reading this, I agreed to be an organ donor when I renewed my driver's license several years ago. I had to pull my license out of my wallet and check it to be sure. You should do so right now, too.

I have some friends who have put great thought into this and how their organs can help others live longer lives. I have other friends who are also organ donors but have not thought about it much at all, having the attitude that they will be dead and don't really care. Regardless of how you feel, those who benefit from your organ donations will be forever grateful, as will their family members and friends.

Mothers will be able to bear children. Fathers will be able to walk their daughters down the wedding aisle. Grandparents will be able to hug their grandkids. And young children can learn to smile, knowing their lives won't likely end anytime soon.

As a regular reader of this magazine, you know we cover a variety of subjects and themes in our cover stories. In the past few months alone, we have written about the benefits of hiring senior employees, dream vacations for local families, ongoing educational opportunities, Christmas card traditions, early risers and more. Some topics have been light-hearted while others have had more serious tones.

As you have likely figured out by now, this month's cover features the stories of local residents and the positive impact of organ donations. I got choked up while reading it, and I found the stories to be incredibly touching. I think you will, too.

If you are not an organ donor, I hope these stories change your mind and have you consider becoming one. We share details on how you can do so, along with the heart-warming stories of local residents who are deeply grateful for those who already have. Be sure to read the story, but grab some tissues first.

Thanks for reading. ■

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# The gift of a future

Residents share their stories  
of organ transplants

By Jackie Wilson

For many people with organ failure, a transplant is their one hope for a return to good health. In the U.S., more than 100,000 people are waiting for an organ donation — and, for many, the wait can be five or more years. For 17 people each day, time runs out before a match can be found (organdonor.gov). Those fortunate enough to receive a transplant are given not only a gift of health, but of hope — and a future to enjoy.

Tully Jackson's life was saved thanks to a liver transplant donor. She says her unknown donor is her hero. Photo by Jackie Wilson



### Iowa Donor Network (IDN)

The Iowa Donor Network is a non-profit organization that serves as the primary contact for organ, tissue and eye donation services for the state of Iowa. IDN coordinates organ recovery, educates healthcare professionals and communities and provides support to donor families. IDN collaborates with healthcare partners, organizations and volunteers to honor the gift of life and inspire others to donate.

IDN is celebrating 30 years of donation support in 2024. Over the past 30 years, IDN has worked with more than 1,900 organ donors, 6,000 organ recipients, and 15,000 tissue donors, giving an average of 75 tissues for transplant, impacting healing among more than 1 million people.

**For more information on IDN, visit [www.iowadonornetwork.org](http://www.iowadonornetwork.org).**

### New liver and life change

When Tully Jackson of West Des Moines woke up one morning feeling bloated with abdominal pain, she went to the hospital. Tests revealed her liver was in bad shape.

The doctor told her that her failing liver was due to her years of drinking alcohol.

“The doctor said, ‘If you don’t change your lifestyle, you’ll die,’” she recalls.

Tully felt she had been a “normal drinker” since high school, with few consequences to her drinking. However, as the years passed, her drinking progressed, and, during the pandemic, it worsened.

Her liver could no longer process fluids, and doctors couldn’t save it. Her doctor referred her to the University of Iowa transplant team to determine if she was a candidate for a liver transplant. She was put on the transplant national registry in November 2022.

On midnight Feb. 9, 2023, the call came that a liver was available and was a match. They performed the transplant surgery on the morning of Feb. 10.

“My donor was a hero,” Tully says.

Her surgeon at Iowa City was “the best of the best,” she says. “He was a hockey fan and said my scar looked like a hockey stick,” she laughs. “Iowa City was amazing.”

She spent eight days in the hospital. After surgery, she sent a thank you letter to her donor’s family. The letter goes to the transplant team, which reviews it and forwards it to the donor family. She doesn’t know the donor or family’s history and has sent several thank you letters.

“I’ve told them how grateful I am for the gift of life. They saved me,” Tully says.

Tully must take 10 different anti-rejection drugs for the rest of her life. A few months after

the transplant, she was hospitalized, but now she says she feels great.

She credits her husband, Joe, and their two teenage sons for helping after the surgery.

“I’ve got a close circle of friends. My husband and sister-in-law advocated for me, asking questions about surgery and recovery. People brought meals to our house,” Tully says. “I’m lucky to have a great group of people who care about me and my family.”

With her new liver and no longer drinking, she’s enjoying soccer games, has a fulfilling job, and her family is back on track.

“I keep saying how grateful I am to do these things. The path I was on, I wouldn’t have been able to do that.”

Because of her positive experience, Tully volunteers for the Iowa Donor Network by participating in speaking engagements and telling her story. Part of the reason she volunteers is showing her appreciation for getting a second chance to change her life.

If she could meet the donor’s family, she’d like to thank them again.

“Because of their selfless decision to be an organ donor, it gave me life. I want to say how much I appreciate it. It was a big decision, and I’m thankful they did that. I wish I could help in their grief,” she reflects. “I’m living a full life because of what they did. Without it, I wouldn’t be a mom or wife.”

Tully is adamant about never drinking again.

“I put my husband through the ringer. The kids are so resilient. Our family feels good.

When the doctors said I’d die, that’s when it all changed,” she reflects. “I had to experience the messiness to be who I am now. I feel great. It’s amazing and nothing short of a miracle.”

### Gift to her sister

Growing up, Jacalyn Priestley’s sister suffered from lupus and frequent medical complications, impacting her kidney function. In 1997, her kidney failed, and she needed a transplant.

At the time, Jacalyn was a young adult. She was unsure of starting a family, so she declined getting tested to see if she was a possible donor. Instead, Jacalyn’s sister’s husband donated his kidney.

Over the years, the function of the transplanted kidney declined to the point that she needed another transplant. This time, Jacalyn wanted to be tested, even though her own health with Crohn’s disease might disqualify her. She was approved in June and readied for transplant surgery in December. She felt fortunate to help, yet felt anxious about the surgery.

“Medical problems scare me,” she admits. “It was the only surgery I ever had.”

She underwent a complete physical, as well as mental evaluation.

“The transplant doctor talked about how you have a sense of loss or your body might feel different,” she says. “Once that organ is gone, it’s not yours. You can’t tell that person what to do with your organ.”

As Jacalyn was still nervous about the surgery, she prepared by incorporating meditation as a way to cope.

“I repeated the phrase, ‘I’m going to recover quickly.’ I gave those phrases to the anesthesia



nurse to say while I was in surgery. Putting positive messages into my body was helpful," Jacalyn says.

The sisters were in separate operating rooms. She asked the doctors to take a picture of her kidney. She says the decision to take her left kidney was interesting.

"They evaluated both, but took the left kidney because, if I was in a car accident, my right side would be more protected."

Recovery went well and Jacalyn only had a few small scars. She was restricted with lifting and exercise and needed to kennel her 60-pound dog for a time.

"The people at the dog daycare were cool and helpful," she says.

Jacalyn's sister's new kidney helped eliminate the need for dialysis, and her health is improved. Her sister was grateful.

"She was matter-of-fact, but that's her nature. I think that's how she handled her disease over all these years," she says.

After surgery, Jacalyn developed high blood pressure and some weight gain.

"It was just a minor side effect," she says.

She says she's always been an organ donor,

specifying that, if anything happened to her, she wanted her organs to go to her sister first.

In retrospect, she feels she should have given her kidney the first time but admits she was afraid.

"I'd do it again," Jacalyn says. "I wish I'd done it the first time."

Today, as she reflects, she says the surgery wasn't a big deal, and she doesn't define herself as a kidney donor.

"It seems like a non-event. It's one of the coolest things I've done," she reflects. "It didn't really change anything about my life."

### Gifts to 51 people

Neil and Trudy Hancock, along with their twin boys, enjoyed a full family life until the morning Trudy suffered a cardiac event and was rushed to the hospital. After five days in the intensive care unit, doctors told the family Trudy wasn't expected to recover.

The Iowa Donor Network contacted Neil in the ICU, where they discussed donating Trudy's organs. Trudy, who was 44, was an ideal candidate for organ donation.

Neil and his sons discussed donating her



Jacalyn Priestley of West Des Moines donated her kidney to her sister. Photo by Jackie Wilson

organs.

"We all agreed it was something she'd want to do. We might as well help people. We made



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the decision,” Neil says.

Trudy died in July 2020, and her two kidneys, corneas and liver were used for transplants. She also donated bone and tissue. A year later, Neil learned of the full impact of her donations.

“There were 50 more people assisted: 33 grafts from bone and tissue and 17 skin grafts. They said it went as far as Tennessee and South Korea,” Neil says.

Neil says the team at the Iowa Donor Network (IDN) offered support groups and remembrances.

“The day of the donation, the IDN brought a candle and a quilt. It was comforting and amazing support for any questions we had,” he says.

Neil says Trudy was a swim coach and enjoyed nurturing young athletes.

“This was just an extension of her donation — giving of her time as a coach,” he recalls. “She was remembered as a good mother, wife and swim coach who cared about kids’ success and seeing them achieve their goals,” he says.

He recommends people’s loved ones donate if the opportunity arises.

### How to become an organ donor

Register with the DMV or register online at the Iowa Donor Network website, [www.iowadonornetwork.org](http://www.iowadonornetwork.org).

- 637 Iowans are waiting for an organ transplant.
- 103,388 people are on the National Organ Waiting List.
- 16 Iowans are waiting for a heart
- 559 Iowans are waiting for a kidney
- 347 organs were transplanted in Iowa in 2022.

“There are lots of valuable organs, and people are waiting for years to continue their life,” he says.

Since then, Neil’s friends have indicated they are organ donors on their driver’s license.

“It helped ease the shock — that it wasn’t all for nothing,” Neil says. “Really, it sounds odd, but cremate it or use it. It was the logical choice to donate instead. The healthy viable organs save life. We never second guessed it.” ■



Trudy Hancock was known as a wonderful mother, wife and swim coach who cared about people. After she died suddenly, her donated organs and tissue benefitted 51 people.

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# ESTATE planning to protect a special needs child

We often assist families of children with special needs with estate planning. One challenge is ensuring that the child has long-term protection. While the child is a minor, the parents have the ability to act in the child's best interest. But, when the child turns 18, he or she is a legal adult. The parents can no longer get medical information, arrange for therapy or oversee finances. Luckily, there is a solution.



In 2019, the Iowa Legislature enacted major changes to the Guardian and Conservatorship statute. The new law went into effect on Jan. 1, 2020, and applies to all new cases, as well as to existing guardianships and conservatorships.

A new provision permits the filing of a standby guardianship or conservatorship for

a minor who is at least 17½ years old, which will take effect when the minor turns 18. The standby proceeding for a minor approaching the age of majority starts in probate court rather than juvenile court.

Previously, the law required the minor to turn 18 before any proceeding could commence. There was often a delay between the 18th birthday and the hearing establishing a guardianship or conservatorship. That can be detrimental to an individual who needs assistance. The new law is very helpful because it allows for action before the individual turns 18.

A guardianship is often necessary and beneficial because a child with special needs will continue to need guidance even after becoming a legal adult. The guardianship will allow the guardian to continue to act as a parent — helping with housing decisions, making medical appointments and setting up

services.

The law also allows for the establishment of a conservatorship, which gives someone else (the conservator) control over the protected person's finances. A conservator can also apply for Social Security disability or Medicaid benefits for the child with special needs.

The conservatorship can stay in place if the individual will need long-term assistance in handling finances. Or, the conservatorship can terminate once a Social Security representative payee is set up.

Make sure that you have all of the information you need before your child turns 18. Work with an attorney who specializes in disability law and who is on the cutting edge of the new guardianship and conservatorship law. ■

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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# SPRING cleaning

Can you answer “Yes” to these fire safety questions?

From “The Siren,” the West Des Moines Fire Department newsletter

Spring is here, and you know what that means — spring cleaning. Many people think of spring cleaning as a chance to remove dust from hard-to-reach places, throw out old food sitting in their cupboards, and go through boxes stacked in their garage. It is also a great time to evaluate your fire safety risks. Here are some things to ask yourself:

## 1. Have I cleared out any clutter from my home, especially in hallways and stairways?

Did you know that clutter provides fuel for a fire to spread? Make sure that all your exits are clear and have a clear path to them. If you have any items blocking an exit, move them immediately. This ensures your family will have good escape routes should you need to evacuate due to fire.

## 2. Have I checked my smoke and carbon monoxide alarms?

It is important that you and your family get the earliest warning in the event of a fire. Replace the batteries in your smoke alarms and test each one. Do the same with your carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure these alarms are properly placed. Smoke alarms should be placed in each sleeping area, in the hallway outside the bedrooms, and at least one on each level of your home. You should have at least one carbon monoxide

alarm installed on each level of your home as well.

## 3. Is my kitchen safe?

Spills and clutter in your kitchen increase the likelihood of a fire breaking out or getting worse. You should clean up food spills right away to keep grease from collecting on your counters and stove, which can easily catch fire. Clean up any clutter on your countertops or stove tops so that, if a fire does start, it won't have as much to keep it going.

## 4. Have I inspected my electrical cords?

Electrical cords can become damaged and frayed over time. This is especially true if you have pets that chew on the cords. Check each cord in your home. If they show even the slightest damage, replace them immediately. Another safe practice is to limit the number of cords running from a single outlet, as this can cause overloading to occur.

## 5. Have I checked my clothes dryer?

Regularly clean your clothes dryer lint trap. Lint is highly combustible and can easily cause a fire if it isn't removed. Clean your dryer vent and hoses at least once a year to remove and prevent any excess lint buildup or blockages. Move combustible items such as boxes and clothing away from your dryer. ■

## BOOK REVIEWS

Courtesy of Beaverdale Books

### ‘Diavola’

Family drama with all of its undercurrents and toxicity is not a new concept for a book, but mixing that particular brand of unsettling anxiety with the slow dread of a deliciously gothic haunted house story is so much fun. Jennifer Thorne is at the top of her game in this genre-blending new novel that absolutely swept me away.

Something is wrong in the beautiful old villa the Pace family has rented in the Italian countryside. And it's not just one sister's biting remarks or the parents' willing ignorance of the exhausting family dynamic. Anna is the clear outcast in the family and the only one who notices the creepy vibes in their temporary home. The villagers clearly know something about what is going on, but Anna is left alone to navigate both her caustic family and something even more insidious on this vacation that will leave all kinds of scars.

This meticulously paced and immensely satisfying book is easily one of my favorites for the year. I highly recommend it for all the black sheep out there who get a shiver up their spine when they hear the words “family vacation.” ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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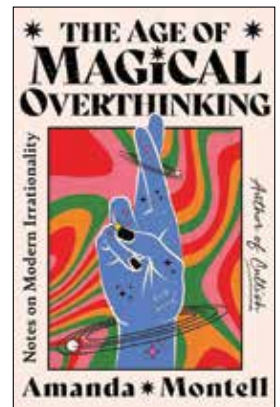
### ‘The Age of Magical Overthinking’

When I read something that feels like therapy, I tend to make a scrunchy face. Mental health books are not my jam. However, Amanda Montell is different. Her witty, sharp writing can cut me to the quick, but I'm usually laughing too hard to feel the ick.

Fresh off of her bestselling book, “Cultish,” Montell has decided to show us the equivalent of “this is your brain on social media.” With plenty of relatable personal stories, research and compassion, she dives into why magical thinking is so prevalent right now, and the ways in which it twists even our closest relationships.

Montell isn't against TikTok tarot card readers or the worship of Taylor Swift. (She boldly shares her own foibles in this regard.) Instead she builds a very timely and forgiving story that shows us why we're all so anxious these days and the gasping attempts we're making to gain a little control over the bonkers world in which we've found ourselves.

For a book that seemed destined for my “not for me” pile, I was shocked by how much I loved this one. Who knows? Maybe it was just good vibes made manifest. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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# MEET Rachel Bakey

Fifth grade Westridge teacher

**Author's note:** *Jordan Creek Living discovered five former Westridge students who are now teachers at Westridge Elementary School. Rachel Bakey is the third teacher featured.*



Rachel Bakey is one of the five teachers at Westridge Elementary School who attended school there.

Rachel Bakey is in her first year teaching fifth grade at Westridge Elementary. However, she spent seven years at the school previously.

Bakey was a student at Westridge from 2002-2008. She says former teachers impacted her decision to become a teacher.

“Throughout my academic years, I had many terrific teachers and several that were true champions for their students. I often reflect back on the impact they had on my success with gratitude,” she says. “Teachers like Mrs. Tjeerdsma, Miss Wheatley and Mrs. Robbins went above and beyond. Having had such impactful teachers in my foundational years, I realized the positive impact and difference a teacher could make on students’ lives.”

In addition, her father provided inspiration in her career, as he’s been a P.E. teacher for 30 years in the WDM Community School District.

“I have witnessed the difference he made in the lives of hundreds of students,” she says. “He gave me the most remarkable advice. If you choose a job you love, you never have to work another day in your life.”

She began substitute teaching at Westridge in 2021, forming relationships with staff.

“I was fortunate to have the opportunity to complete a student teaching rotation and a practicum at Westridge with Mrs. Gerdes and Mrs. Jaros. Being in the building reminded me of the welcoming, loving and helpful students and staff that make Westridge so special. It felt like home,” she says.

Since Bakey attended Westridge, the building has been remodeled and Westridge’s mascot changed from yellow and blue Wolverines to black and orange Tigers. Her sixth-grade math teacher, Mrs. Tjeerdsma, is now the principal. A few former teachers still teach, serving as great mentors.

“I am still adjusting to them being colleagues rather than former teachers,” she says.

As her first year of teaching comes to a close, Bakey says she has enjoyed getting to know her students.

“When you get to know a child on a personal level and what their interests are, you truly build a strong, positive teacher-student relationship. This has strengthened my overall classroom community and provided us with so many laughs as well as memories,” she says.

As some days can seem long with rambunctious kids, she recalls her mantra.

“When the days get long or rough, teachers must remember that you can never erase a great teacher’s impact on a student’s life and academic journey,” she says. ■

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## Books Under the Big Top fundraiser

Thursday, April 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Raccoon River Nature Lodge, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines.

Join the WDM Library Friends Foundation for their biggest fundraiser of the year. This year's theme is "Books Under the Big Top" and will feature beer, wine and cheese tasting, carnival-style games, and a raffle at the end of the evening. You'll also have a chance to explore the new Words on Wheels outreach vehicle, get a library card, and check out books that night. Please consider bringing cash for the games. A free-will donation will be accepted at the door, or you can donate ahead of time at [wdmlibrary.org/friends](http://wdmlibrary.org/friends).



## Youth Justice Initiative Trivia Night fundraiser

April 16, 5:30-9 p.m.  
The Hall, 111 S. 11th St., West Des Moines

This fundraiser is held in partnership with the West Des Moines Leadership Academy class of 2024. Trivia, silent auction, food and drink are featured. Trivia starts promptly at 6 p.m. For tickets and to donate, visit <https://givebutter.com/friendsofyji>.

## 53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition

Through April 14  
Anderson Gallery,  
1310 25th St., Des Moines  
[andersongallery.wp.drake.edu](http://andersongallery.wp.drake.edu)

A showcase of the students of the Drake Art & Design program, this competitive juried exhibition highlights student work in a variety of media.

## Words on Wheels Celebration

Thursday, April 26, 2-6 p.m.  
West Des Moines Public Library

Library staff is happy to officially introduce the public to the new Words on Wheels vehicle. Stop by the library's front parking lot for vehicle tours and giveaways of library swag. The Kates Kookies Cookie-Mobile will also be in attendance selling cookies. A ribbon cutting will be hosted at 4 p.m.

## Chamber Annual Dinner

Thursday, May 16, 5-9 p.m.  
Reservation deadline Friday,  
May 10, 5 p.m.  
Val Air Ballroom, 301 Ashworth  
Road, West Des Moines

Save the date for the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Annual Dinner, commemorating 100 years of the chamber. This year's theme is "Roaring '20s: The West is Yet to Come." Enjoy this community celebration featuring a live band, casino entertainment and other surprises. To register, visit <https://wdmchamber.org/events/annual-dinner/>.

## Applications accepted for Leadership Academy

Deadline to apply is May 31

The West Des Moines Leadership Academy, a program of the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, announced the opening of applications for the 2024-25 program. The West Des Moines Leadership program is designed to help aspiring leaders develop their leadership skills and capabilities to make a positive impact on the community.

The Leadership Academy is an intensive nine-month program that provides participants with practical training, hands-on experience, and access to industry experts. The program includes modules on leadership styles, team building, communication, decision-making, and more. Participants will also influence the future of West Des Moines through strategic leadership development and workforce retention. For more information, visit <https://wdmchamber.org/programs/wdm-leadership-academy/>.

## Solid waste events for WDM residents

- **April 12: Scrap tire drop off**, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., West Des Moines Public Services East, 560 S. 16th St.

- **May 23: National Public Works Week Celebration**, 4-7 p.m. Valley Junction Farmer's Market

- **June 3-7: Spring cleanup** on regular trash day. Watch for details. No appliances accepted (see June 8 event).

- **June 8: Scrap appliance, metal drop off**, 8 a.m. to noon, West Des Moines Public Services East, 560 S. 16th St.

- **Sept. 7: Scrap appliance, metal drop off**, 8 a.m. to noon, West Des Moines Public Services East, 560 S. 16th St.

- **Dec. 30 - Jan. 11: Winter yard waste and Christmas tree collection.**



## Gary's Ride

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m.  
Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead

Gary's Ride is a fundraiser for MercyOne Richard Deming Cancer Center for terminal brain cancer patients. Riders and non riders are invited to the celebration at the end of the ride at the Handlebar Restaurant in Dallas Center. It will feature great food, vendors and entertainment for the whole family. For more information and to register, visit [garysrideiowa.org](http://garysrideiowa.org).

## Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony

Monday, May 27, 11 a.m.  
Resthaven Cemetery, 801 19th St.,  
West Des Moines

This event is held outside so bringing a lawn chair is recommended. Music will be provided by Greater Des Moines Community Band.



Check for cancellations



Photo courtesy of Blank Park Zoo

## Wild Lights Festival

Through May 27, 7:30-10:30 p.m.  
Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines  
[blankparkzoo.com/events/calendar/wild-lights-festival](http://blankparkzoo.com/events/calendar/wild-lights-festival)

The Blank Park Zoo's Wild Lights Festival returns. Visitors can view more than 50 hand-crafted creations that light up the zoo. The illuminated Asian mythical creatures create plenty of photo opportunities for families.



## Middle of the Map Tattoo Convention

April 12-14  
Hy-Vee Hall, 730 Third St., Des Moines  
[middleofthemaptattoo.com](http://middleofthemaptattoo.com)

Exhibits, seminars and entertainment, all inside one building, that will put any ink enthusiast in tattoo heaven. Awards will be presented throughout the weekend for different styles, best sleeves and more. Live musical performances are also featured.

## You Can Grow Orchids

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Canoyer Garden Center, 3355 S.E. Gateway Drive, Grimes

The Central Iowa Orchid Society is hosting an orchid event, with an orchid display, culture information, orchid sale and orchid clinic in which experts will answer questions about your troubled orchid and even help to repot it. Follow them on: Central Iowa Orchid Society Facebook page.



## Poetry Palooza

April 19-20  
Grand View University, 1200 Grandview Ave., Des Moines  
[poetryamp.org/poetry-palooza](http://poetryamp.org/poetry-palooza)

Poetry slams, panels, workshops and book launches create a palooza of poetry. This festival celebrates esteemed poets, cultivates students and emerging talent, and demonstrates the positive power of poetry.

## Events at The Brenton Arboretum

Various dates  
The Brenton Arboretum, 25141 260th St., Dallas Center

For more information or to register, visit [www.TheBrentonArboretum.org/events](http://www.TheBrentonArboretum.org/events).

- **April 18**, Nature Club, varying times. Register by age group.
- **April 21**, noon to 3 p.m., Earth Day Celebrations; 1-3 p.m., Exploratory Beekeeping.
- **April 27**, 7 a.m., Birds & Bagels.



## Drake Relays

April 24-27  
Drake Stadium, 2719 Forest Ave., Des Moines  
[godrakebulldogs.com](http://godrakebulldogs.com)

The Drake Relays draw premier track and field athletes from around the country and some of the best in-state high school track athletes to Des Moines.

## Iowa Cubs April home games

Principal Park,  
1 Line Drive, Des Moines  
[iowacubs.com](http://iowacubs.com)

- April 16 at 6:38 p.m. vs. Louisville (Cincinnati Reds)
- April 17 at 12:08 p.m.
- April 18 at 12:08 p.m.
- April 19 at 7:08 p.m.
- April 20 at 3:08 p.m.
- April 21 at 1:08 p.m.
- April 30 at 6:38 p.m. vs. Omaha (Kansas City Royals) ■



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# PUT a traditional spin on Cinco de Mayo

*(Family Features)* Whether Cinco de Mayo means an opportunity to celebrate your family's heritage or it's simply an excuse to gather with the ones you love, every holiday truly is about the same thing: special moments together.

Take this year's festivities the traditional route with recipes that combine familiar favorites with ingredients you normally may not use otherwise, such as cactus. This Mexican Cactus Pork Stew makes Cinco de Mayo a cinch with the use of a Dutch oven.

Visit Culinary.net to find more family-friendly recipes perfect for celebrating holidays throughout the year. ■

## Mexican cactus pork stew

- 1 pound pork shoulder (leftover or fresh)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 3 cups beef broth
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) mild chili beans
- 1 cup chopped cactus (nopales)
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 green onions, chopped, for garnish
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro, for garnish

- If using fresh pork, in Dutch oven, cube and brown it with onion and jalapeno pepper. If using leftover pork, reheat in Dutch oven with onion and jalapeno pepper.
- Add beef broth, diced tomatoes, chili beans, cactus, garlic powder, smoked paprika, cayenne pepper and salt and pepper, to taste.
- Simmer 25 minutes then garnish with green onions and cilantro.



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## Kid-friendly Mexican cinnamon cookies

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

- 4 sticks butter, at room temperature
- 4 cups self-rising flour, plus additional for coating workspace
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup sugar

### Topping:

- 2/3 cup sugar
  - 4 teaspoons cinnamon
- 
- Preheat oven to 375 F.
  - In bowl, combine butter, 4 cups flour and cinnamon. Add egg and sugar then knead into ball.
  - Spread additional flour on counter and cut ball into six sections. Roll each section into 24-inch ropes then cut into 1-inch pieces and place on cookie sheet.
  - Bake 10 minutes.
  - To make topping: In bowl, combine sugar and cinnamon.
  - Roll warm cookies in mixture and let cool on rack. ■



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# APRIL is Stress Awareness Month

Stress can affect you both emotionally and physically. Emotionally, stress can make you anxious, depressed, irritable, have trouble concentrating, difficulty making decisions and unable to switch your racing mind off.



Stress can silently affect you physically, causing high blood pressure, headaches, chest pains, indigestion, trouble sleeping and panic attacks.

While working on this article, I found a lot of wonderful information on the American Institute of Stress website, [www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org). I found I was guilty of several bad habits that can contribute to stress, such as multi-tasking and eating meals while doing other things like watching TV or while on technology. Surprisingly, I realized I sometimes clench my jaw, which can be a sign of stress. Often, lifestyle changes can reduce stress by

going for a walk, spending time in nature, enjoying hobbies, taking deep breaths several times during the day and reducing time on technology.

But sometimes lifestyle changes are not enough, and we need assistance. Your health insurance will often provide coverage for that assistance.

Mental and behavioral health services are considered an essential benefit on health insurance plans that are compliant with the Affordable Care Act. Coverage includes outpatient counseling and psychotherapy, inpatient services and substance abuse treatment. Check with your insurance company for a list of covered services and providers in your network.

**Medicare Part B helps pay for these outpatient mental health services:**

- One depression screening per year. You must get the screening in a primary care doctor's office or primary care clinic that can provide follow-up treatment and referrals.
- Individual and group psychotherapy

with doctors (or with certain other licensed professionals, as the state where you get the services allows).

- Family counseling, if the main purpose is to help with your treatment.
- Testing to find out if you're getting the services you need and if your current treatment is helping you.
- Diagnostic tests.
- Intensive outpatient program services (began Jan. 1, 2024).
- A one-time "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit. This visit includes a review of your possible risk factors for depression.
- A yearly "Wellness" visit. Talk to your doctor or other health care provider about changes in your mental health since your last visit.

More mental health services can be found at [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov). ■

Information provided by Laura Patton, FHIAS, Patton Insurance Benefits, 1112 Maple St., West Des Moines, 515-270-8178.

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# CHAMBER recognizes staff for achievements

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce recognizes Kara Matheson, vice president of workforce development and culture, and Meredith Murphy, talent attraction manager, for achieving certifications from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Kara Matheson has earned the SHRM-SCP (Senior Certified Professional) designation, while Meredith Murphy has attained the SHRM-CP (Certified Professional) designation.

These certifications, granted by the Society for Human Resource Management, are globally recognized credentials indicating expertise in HR management. Kara and Meredith pursued their certifications through a dedicated study group with Central Iowa SHRM, demonstrating their commitment to professional development.

“We are all about continued learning, and what better way than through SHRM with all of their Human Resources expertise,” said Matheson. “We can’t wait to continue working with HR professionals and leaders to elevate and connect the region’s workforce to do bigger and better things together.”

Murphy expressed gratitude for the support received during her certification journey, stating, “I wanted to pursue SHRM-CP after meeting so many inspiring professionals who had been through the process.”

For more information about SHRM certifications, visit [www.shrm.org/credentials/certification](http://www.shrm.org/credentials/certification). ■



Kara Matheson



Meredith Murphy

# LIBRARY fundraiser and celebration events



## Books Under the Big Top fundraiser

Join the WDM Library Friends Foundation for their biggest fundraiser of the year — the Seventh Annual Wine, Beer and Cheese Fundraiser, Thursday, April 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Raccoon River Nature Lodge, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines.

This year’s theme is “Books Under the Big Top” and will feature beer, wine and cheese tasting, carnival-style games, and a raffle at the end of the evening. You’ll also have a chance to explore the new Words on Wheels outreach vehicle, get a library card, and check out books that night. Consider bringing cash for the games. A free-will donation will be accepted at the door, or you can donate ahead of time at [wdmlibrary.org/friends](http://wdmlibrary.org/friends).

## Words on Wheels Celebration

The library staff officially introduces the public to the new Words on Wheels vehicle. Stop by the library’s front parking lot on Thursday, April 26, 2-6 p.m. for vehicle tours and giveaways of library swag. The Kates Kookies Cookie-Mobile will also be in attendance selling cookies. A ribbon cutting will be hosted at 4 p.m. ■

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# STORM water conservation

## Incentives offered to WDM residents



Efforts to prevent storm water run-off include soil quality restoration so one's lawn absorbs more water.

Preserving water is not just about shutting off the faucet while brushing your teeth. It includes managing storm water run-off and conserving rain water wisely.

The city of West Des Moines realizes the importance of conserving water in the city and offers incentive programs for residents to get reimbursed for water quality efforts.

One event is the rain barrel workshop. The city has provided rain barrel construction classes. Residents pay a small fee to make their own rain barrels using the city's tools and instructions. If residents are unable to attend the rain barrel class, they can install or purchase their own and be reimbursed up to \$75.

Jess Lancial, naturalist with the WDM Parks and Recreation department, said the rain barrel-making class is popular. "It's a real steal. Once a resident builds a rain barrel, they can reuse water instead of it going straight to the ground and creating run-off. It's a great mitigation effort," she says.

Another example of the city's commitment to improving water quality is the Storm Water Assistance Program (SWAP). The program can be used to install practices on private property to mitigate water quality issues and prevent run-off. For example, a homeowner can put in a rain garden or use different native landscaping techniques for soil quality.

Isaac Svoboda, WDM's city engineering technician, says SWAP exists so the city can assist in mitigating water quality issues on private property.

The city will provide a 50% matching reimbursement, up to \$1,500 each, for three different practices on the property. Isaac often visits homes to discuss the program and offer insights. Homeowners can use funds for themselves or to hire a landscape professional.

The reimbursement budget is on a first-come, first-served basis. Requirements for reimbursement include obtaining project approval before work starts and being a WDM resident. After the project is complete, receipts are submitted for reimbursement.

Jess says that a combination of water quality efforts add up.

"Iowa is one of the most altered states in the nation, and this can impact water quality. Water is one of Iowa's biggest environmental issues. It's not just an agriculture problem. We can all make small changes," she says. "Water quality impacts all of us. It's not an issue that is just going to go away."



Rain barrels are one tool for preventing water run-off.

Isaac encourages residents to take advantage of SWAP.

"Water quality is not an easy fix. If people are improving soil quality, it will make a difference in the long haul," he says. "It can have a positive impact on a community's environment."

For more information on the program, visit [www.wdm.iowa.gov/residents/stormwater-assistance-program-swap](http://www.wdm.iowa.gov/residents/stormwater-assistance-program-swap) or scan the QR code. ■





# GLASS hired as library director

The West Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees announced that Traci Glass has been named the new director of the West Des Moines Public Library. She comes by way of the Lincoln City Libraries system in Lincoln, Nebraska, and was the unanimous choice after a months-long, nationwide search to fill the position.



Glass has worked in public libraries for more than 25 years in systems around the country, including Arizona, Oregon, Tennessee and Nebraska. After earning her master's degree in Information and Library Sciences from The University of Arizona, Glass spent years moving up the ranks as a youth services librarian, youth services manager, teen services coordinator, information services administrator, and then assistant director. In her latest position as assistant director of Lincoln City Libraries, she supervised more than 100 employees while overseeing library operations for all eight branch locations and their bookmobile.

"Traci's robust and diverse experiences from other library systems have uniquely prepared her to provide leadership, operations expertise and support for our excellent library staff," said WDM Library Board President Ray Seidelman. "Her positive energy and leadership style will represent the West Des Moines Public Library well as she forms relationships with the community, library patrons and other partners. We look forward to a bright future with Traci."

Glass has extensive experience working in the library realm on a national level, serving as the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Board director at large in 2019 and 2021. She is also a current member of the American Library Association's Graphic Novel and Comics Roundtable. Notably, in 2013, she was awarded the prestigious honor of Oregon Teen Librarian of the Year appointed by the Oregon Library Association.

"I feel so lucky to be welcomed into the West Des Moines Public Library family," said Glass. "I was originally drawn to them as an organization because of the emphasis that was put on staff and their enrichment in the library's strategic plan. And, as I learned more, I saw an intense dedication to providing robust and inclusive library services across all levels of the library and city government. I am thrilled to be joining this fabulous team and being able to work alongside staff, the library board, and the Friends Foundation in order to best serve the diverse communities of West Des Moines."

The WDM Library Board of Trustees and the city of West Des Moines' human resources team completed a thorough search to narrow down a pool of incredibly qualified candidates. Of that narrowed-down search, four finalists, including Glass, were invited to interview in-person at the library. Her appointment was an unanimous decision. She will begin her new role on May 13. Plans for a public welcome event are in the works. ■

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## HEALTH By Ashley Powell

### CBD and THC for managing chronic pain



Chronic pain is a pervasive issue affecting millions globally, challenging patients and healthcare providers alike. In recent years, hemp-derived cannabinoids like CBD (cannabidiol) and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) have emerged as promising alternatives for managing chronic pain safely and effectively.

CBD, extracted from industrial hemp plants, interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system, influencing pain perception and inflammation. Research indicates CBD's potential in alleviating various forms of chronic pain, including neuropathic pain, arthritis and migraines. Its non-psychoactive nature makes it a desirable option for individuals seeking relief without the euphoric effects associated with THC.

Conversely, THC, derived from hemp with controlled THC levels, also plays a role in pain management. Despite its psychoactive properties, THC has shown efficacy in reducing chronic pain, particularly neuropathic pain and pain related to conditions like multiple sclerosis. When administered responsibly and under appropriate guidance, THC can offer significant relief without adverse cognitive effects or risk of dependency.

To ensure safe utilization of THC, careful titration of dosage based on individual factors such as weight, age and tolerance is essential. Additionally, opting for products with balanced THC-to-CBD ratios or incorporating CBD alongside THC can help mitigate psychoactive effects while maximizing pain-relieving benefits. ■

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. Reference: Hammell, D C et al. "Transdermal Cannabidiol Reduces Inflammation and Pain-Related Behaviours in a Rat Model of Arthritis." *European Journal of Pain* (London, England) vol. 20,6 (2016)



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## PLAN AHEAD By Dave Cortner

### PREPAY my funeral expenses? Why?



While payment is never a requirement in order to preplan your funeral arrangements, there are several benefits to paying for your services ahead of time.

First of all, it provides the opportunity to pay for expenses based upon current prices. There are even many payment options, including paying all at once or setting up a payment plan. Prepaying expenses guarantees that prepaid service and merchandise selections will be provided at the time of need at no additional expense to your family. This helps to eliminate any financial stress for your family at a time that will already be emotional.

Second, paying in advance will protect your money from Medicaid, should you outlive your assets and need to qualify for assistance. An irrevocable funeral policy is considered a protected asset.

Third, most funeral homes utilize a funding vehicle where your assets are placed at the time of the preplan. This allows your money to be protected and portable, which means that, even if you move away from the area where you originally made your prearrangements, your prepaid policy can easily be transferred to another funeral home.

There are funding options for people at all ages and in all health situations and, as we all know, the prices for everything only go up as time goes by. So, the sooner you do this, the more opportunity you have to save.

What an incredible gift from you to your family. ■

Information provided by Dave Cortner, Hamilton's on Westtown Parkway, 3601 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681



## WELLNESS

By Dr. Meg Kinnetz DNP, ARNP-BC, MSCN

### BENEFITS of BHRT

Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) provides tailored relief for a range of symptoms experienced by both women and men. For women, BHRT can alleviate symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness and insomnia. It can also help prevent bone loss, reduce the risk of osteoporosis, and support cardiovascular health, while improving cognitive function and enhancing libido.



In men, BHRT addresses symptoms of andropause, including fatigue, reduced muscle mass, low libido, erectile dysfunction and irritability. By restoring testosterone levels to optimal ranges, BHRT can improve energy levels, muscle strength and sexual function. Additionally, it may support cardiovascular health, enhance cognitive function, and promote overall vitality and wellbeing.

One of the key benefits of BHRT is its personalized approach, allowing healthcare providers to customize treatment plans based on individual hormone levels and symptoms. Experienced providers specialize in personalized management of hormonal imbalances, offering comprehensive evaluations and tailored treatment plans.

Overall, bioidentical hormone replacement therapy offers a natural and effective solution for restoring hormonal balance in both women and men, improving quality of life and promoting long-term health and vitality. ■

Information provided by Dr. Meg Kinnetz DNP, ARNP-BC, MSCN, Vivid Wellness Lounge, 1980 N.W. 94th St., Suite E/F, Clive. [Livin-Vivid.com](http://Livin-Vivid.com) 515-415-1550.

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## HEALTH

By Shelly Stewart-Sandusky, MS, LMFT

### LIVING with an anxiety disorder

Anxiety is a common emotion everyone experiences at some point, generally when there is a situation or stressor that warrants an anxious response, after which, unhealthy levels of anxiety will go away as the situation is resolved. Problematic anxiety doesn't go away. People who suffer from anxiety disorders often experience anxiety in a chronic way, resulting in thought patterns and physical symptoms that are a constant part of their life. For instance, racing thoughts that can't seem to be stopped or deflected, constant worry or fear of something bad happening, and physical symptoms such as fatigue, muscle tension or nausea, among others. For a person with an anxiety disorder, it can be hard to imagine not having to constantly battle your own mind to be functional throughout the day or to always be worried about something even when there doesn't seem to be a reason to worry. But there are different things you can do to help.



- Therapy can be a helpful way to process through anxiety and learn about coping strategies to better manage it and to learn about triggers and patterns associated with your anxiety.

- Medication management with a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner can be helpful for some people.

- Meditation can help calm the central nervous system and help give your mind a reset that helps alleviate some anxiety. ■

Information provided by Shelly Stewart-Sandusky, MS, LMFT, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com).

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# TEACHERS' SUBTITLES. Another Frankenstein. More Spider-Verse. And laugh-out-loud moments.

If you have not been to the movies lately, you've missed some good films. Some of these will still be in theaters, but others might be close to streaming. Keep this article handy to remind you to look for them.



## “The Teachers’ Lounge”

I knew nothing about this movie going in and have praised it ever since that day. It is nominated for Best International Film (formerly known as Best Foreign Film). It is in German with subtitles. By the way, contrary to public opinion, no one has ever been injured by a subtitle. The movie is about a teacher in a German school who discovers a co-worker is responsible for thefts in the teachers’ lounge. When she confronts her, you know what hits the fan. And, of course, the person denies the accusation, and it becomes a “she said/she said” battle with the accuser being the one who is persecuted. It is a powerful film and a powerful statement on the world we live in. One of the best films I saw last year.

**Grade: A**



## “Lisa Frankenstein”

I drove across Des Moines from the south-side Fleur Cinema to Waukee and The Palms Theatres to see the second movie of the day, a modern twist on the Frankenstein story. My expectations were low, but the film managed to surprise me. It was entertaining and, at times, charming. A high school girl hanging out with a guy who literally pulled himself from his grave during a lightning storm is a unique story, but Diablo Cody, who wrote the great movie “Juno” back in 2007, shows that she still has the chops to write a funny and clever film. **Grade: C+**



## “The Zone of Interest”

“The Teachers’ Lounge” was intense and powerful, but this look at the people living in an opulent home next to the notorious Auschwitz prison camp ranks close. It’s an oddly made film, giving us scene after scene of their everyday life with little formal storytelling. It is a story that is difficult to believe. The screams and gunshots were completely ignored as if they didn’t happen. Tough to sit through, but a fascinating tale.

**Grade: A-**



## “Madame Web”

Dakota Johnson from the “Shades of Grey” films joins the Marvel Universe as a fringe character in the Spider-Verse in an effort from the Sony company to continue to milk the Spider-Man deal they signed years ago with Marvel Comics. The film has been universally trashed, and Johnson has been excoriated. My grown son and I went to this with low expectations, and we both enjoyed it. Not sure what people were expecting. **Grade: C+**

## “Bob Marley: One Love”

My knowledge of Bob Marley is limited. I know a couple of his songs, but the depth of his political activism and his dogged artistic drive were surprising to me. The movie is well made, but I really could have used



# LOCAL FILM REVIEWS



subtitles as the accents, though accurate, were difficult to understand. It is a good movie that I will rewatch at home with subtitles and will probably appreciate it even more. **Grade: B+**

## “Drive-Away Dolls”

Director/writer Joel Coen (of the Coen brothers) gives us a raunchy and profane story of two women on a road-trip in a car with a unique present in the trunk. The movie and the language never hold back, which produces a mixture of shock and “laugh-out-loud” moments. One of the craziest movies I’ve seen in a while, and it is sure to offend many.



**Grade: C**



## “Dune: Part 2”

One of the movies I was most looking forward to this year. Director Denis Villeneuve and a tremendous returning cast deliver a super-long (2:45) sequel that, in my opinion, brings up more questions than answers. I loved the first film, but this sequel was long and confusing. Word to the wise — if you are going to see this film, do yourself a favor and drive to Waukee and see it in the IMAX theatre. Visually stunning! **Grade: B- ■**

*Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXn0 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales. You can also follow him on Twitter @MrMovieDSM.*



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Mandy Berkeley, Iowa Made Market



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Ryan Cooper, Blind Pig Cocktail Bodega



Kevin Gallagher with customer Barney Munro, Penrod Barber Shop



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Beth Rowles, Yarn Junction Co.



Christina Crook, Upcycled DSM



Deb Mitchell and Mary Conklin, Cindy's Boutique



Holly Naimi and Abi Gross, Coffee Cats Cafe



Linzi Murray, Reading in Public



Susan Watts, Olson Larsen Galleries



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