

Living

MAGAZINE

The gift of a future

Residents share
their stories of
organ transplants

Meet Stacie Walker

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Mexican cactus pork stew

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Touching the lives of pets and people

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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. ■

SHANE GOODMAN
President and Publisher
Big Green Umbrella Media
shane@dmcityview.com
515-953-4822, ext. 305



Tammy Pearson
Editor
515-953-4822 ext. 302
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Dan Juffer
Senior Advertising Account
Executive
515-953-4822 ext. 303
dan.juffer@dmcityview.com

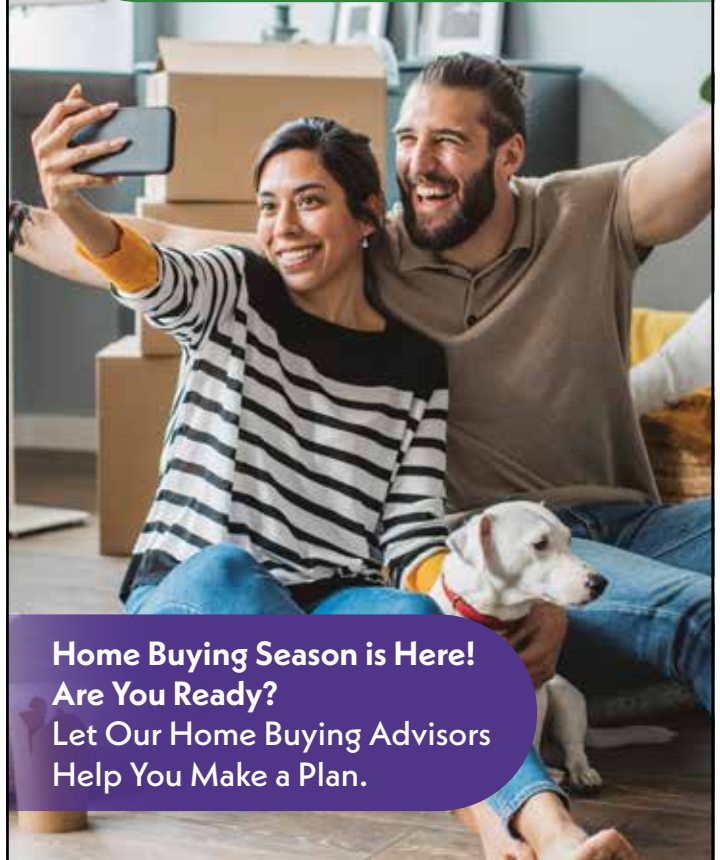


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The gift of a future

Residents share
their stories of
organ transplants

By Ashley Rullestad

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.

When Nancy Sayles was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder, she was told she needed a bone marrow transplant. Thanks to a donor, she has been able to recover.

Kidney cousins

When Karen Bradley’s cousin, Stephanie Gage, needed a new kidney due to complications from diabetes, Bradley decided to see if she could be her living donor.

“She had already had two kidney transplants and a pancreas transplant from deceased donors; the first one stopped working, and the second one was on its way out. A live kidney donation is a more successful transplant, so when she said she needed one, it was a done deal to me.”

As a direct donor, Bradley did not end up being a match, so doctors gave her the option of a non-directed donation, in which she would donate her kidney to whomever it proved to best match. In return, her cousin was moved higher on the recipient list and would receive a kidney sooner.

Bradley was in a group of six having surgery on the same day — three donors and three recipients, including her cousin.

Bradley donated in 2019, and she and her cousin have both recovered well. At the time, Bradley had three young children, including a 17-month-old. She went in for surgery on a

How to become an organ donor

Register with the DMV or register online at the Iowa Donor Network website, 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.

Monday, was out by Wednesday and returned to work the next Monday. She is currently on the list to donate a portion of her liver.

“I learned so much in the process and am a huge advocate of organ donation — especially living. I learned that, by donating a small piece of your liver to a recipient, your liver will regenerate to its normal size, and the piece of liver that you donated will grow to its regular size within two weeks.”



When her cousin, Stephanie, needed a kidney, Karen Bradley decided to donate hers. Although her kidney was not a match for her cousin, her donation allowed Stephanie to receive a kidney from another donor.

She has not changed a thing about her lifestyle, and, aside from the 3-inch scar on her lower abdomen, Bradley says she forgets she even gave a kidney up.

“I personally feel that anyone who is healthy enough to donate, should. There is a higher risk of getting hit by a car walking across the street than actually having complications from donating a kidney or liver.”

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Another chance

In February of 2020, after three months of hospitalizations due to critically low blood counts, Nancy Sayles learned she had a rare blood disorder, aplastic anemia (APA), affecting her bone marrow. It is similar to leukemia but is non-cancerous.

“The three months between November 2019 and February 2020, I was desperately sick, and no one could tell me what was wrong. The hospitalizations I had during the three months felt like the doctors were throwing a dart at a wheel to determine what course of treatment to try because no one knew exactly what was wrong with me. The nights were the worst with 3 a.m. wake-up calls from my anxiety and fears.”

In the U.S., fewer than 1,000 people are diagnosed every year with APA, and the vast majority of those are children. Sayles says doctors assume she got APA from the human parvo virus, which was detected in her blood. It was determined she'd need a bone marrow transplant as treatment.

Doctors started the process with a saliva



A bone marrow transplant saved Nancy Sayles' life and gave her family more years with their wife and mother.

swab to match her with potential bone marrow donors. They warned her it could take up to three months to find one potential match, but, in three short weeks, she not only had one potential match, she had 26.

“One of my doctors told me he had never seen that many matches in all his years of being

a hematologist. Among those 26 matches were two people who agreed to give me their stem cells. I was very fortunate to have multiple people step up for me. My transplant finally occurred March 5, 2021 — 13 months after my diagnosis.”

Once her 30-day stay at the University of

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FEATURE

Iowa Hospitals and Clinics was complete, she was released to return home. It was a tough recovery. Because her white blood cells had to be killed off to keep her body from rejecting the donor's stem cells, she had no infection-fighting ability of her own.

"I was required to travel to the U of I each week for three months to check my blood counts," Sayles says. "Over those first three months, I ended up back in the hospital for another 10 days or so with low sodium levels and Epstein-Barr virus, which was reactivated in my body because of the transplant. I was very tired for the first year. There were times I would feel happy that I had managed to brush my teeth in the morning."

During her recovery, Sayles was quarantined for more than two years because her disease and transplant coincided with the pandemic.

"My family was great during this time. They would only go to required places for work and then home, and they always wore a mask to keep me as safe as possible. Life-changing diagnoses truly are a family affair," she says.

Today, Sayles still has checkups at the U of I. Her transplant erased her childhood

vaccinations, so she has been slowly acquiring all those over the last three years. She still gets tired, and she has to be vigilant to guard against sickness, but she's doing well.

"My blood counts are back up, thankfully, and the first time I reached some milestones with my blood, I cried," she says. "Having been on the other side of an illness, and now being blessed to be on this side of an illness, is something I can't quite put into words."

Sayles thanks every person who chooses to donate blood, platelets, stem cells, bone marrow or organs.

"I chose to share my story to highlight the incredible selflessness many strangers gave me. These selfless people will never get the proper thanks they deserve for being a huge part in saving my life. I think about my donors every day and thank them in my heart for what they did for me. They gave me my life back."

Life goes on

May 9, 2012, was the day Alyssa Taber's life changed forever. Her husband, Jay, died of a massive heart attack that day at the age of 33.

"Shock is an understatement," Taber says.



Alyssa and Jay Taber had a short time together. Jay died of a massive heart attack when their son, Aaron, was only a baby.

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“Our son, Aaron, was 6 months old. Jay had let me know he wanted to be an organ donor early on in our relationship. He told me, put it on his driver’s license, and registered online. I walked into Mercy West Lakes on May 9, 2012, knowing our lives had changed, but not until I walked into trauma room No. 9 did I understand how much. He was gone, in a heartbeat.”

Taber was asked many questions in the hours that followed, many of which she had no clue how to answer. But when the medical examiner came up to her and said she had Jay’s driver’s license and it said he was a donor, the question she asked next was easy. “Are you OK if I contact the Iowa Donor Network?”

“In a moment of immense heartache, disbelief and anger, the answer was simple. It was yes,” she says. “It was easy because it was his answer, not mine.”

Although her husband was unable to donate organs, Taber says, besides his heart, “which was golden, his cornea recipients got the next best thing.

“He cared for people. He saw people as people, nothing more, nothing less. Everyone

was valuable in his eyes,” she says.

She has not met any of the recipients of the life-enhancing tissues Jay was able to donate, but she does have two thank-you letters from his cornea recipients. From those letters, her perspective on organ donation started to change.

Taber has never been on a transplant list awaiting a lifesaving or enhancing organ or tissue, and yet she will tell you with 100% certainty that organ donation saved her life, just not in a way anyone can calculate.

“Because Jay said yes to organ donation, my heart has healed in a way it otherwise would not have. Through his donation, I have been surrounded by people who understood. I have been given opportunities to speak primarily about organ donation, but the bonus was talking about Jay,” Taber says. “My son has learned much about his dad through me speaking, asking questions I never thought he would want to know.”

Through healing, Taber married again. Her second husband, Kelby, is the only man their son has known as Dad.

“Saying yes allowed me an opportunity to

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.

walk through the grief of losing Jay, and it has helped in healing my broken heart to be the mom I wanted to be for our son,” she says. ■



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DAHMS is touching the lives of pets and people

Volunteers for Rescue Rehab Rehome

MaryJo “MJ” Dahms is an animal lover.

Because of her passion for furry, four-legged creatures, she’s made a commitment to helping them

however she can. This has resulted in volunteer work for Rescue Rehab Rehome, a central Iowa rescue group founded to help match rescue dogs and kittens with well suited and loving forever homes.

“My favorite memory is assisting with the transfer of animals to our community from other areas of the country to the rescue,” Dahms says. “We have a 96% success rate with finding forever homes for dogs and cats.”

Knowing she’s helped an animal in need is meaningful for Dahms. So, too, is her involvement with Covers of Comfort. This group makes and distributes homemade tie blankets to bring comfort to adult cancer patients. Volunteers also learn these cancer patients’ stories by visiting with them and helping to brighten their days.

“One of my favorite memories of volunteering is having a cancer survivor recognize me in our community and thanking me for taking the time to care,” Dahms says.

Ultimately, Dahms makes time to volunteer because it “brings me peace in this crazy world.

“So many people and pets have no one to be compassionate and show them love,” she says. “It’s my way of making the community a better place. If I touch a life in a positive way, perhaps others will pay that forward.”

For Dahms, volunteering at its essence is about putting yourself out there and advocating for those who can’t do so themselves.

“If everyone took care of their tiny space in this world, it would be a better world,” she says. ■



MaryJo “MJ” Dahms is motivated by her passion for animals to volunteer for a rescue organization.

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LEGAL

By Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D.

U.S. SUPREME Court rules on religious accommodations

Most adults are familiar with the concept that an employer covered by Title VII must provide reasonable accommodations for employees requesting it for religious reasons, if the accommodation does not result in an “undue hardship” to the employer. It does not have to be an organized majority religion or even an organized religion, at all. It can be a religion of one. It does not have to include worship of a deity, but it must rise to the level of “moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views.” And, generally, the employee does not have to prove the sincerity of the belief, but just assert there is one.



Well, this sounds like all the employee must do is say he cannot work on Saturday due to a sincerely held religious belief, and boom, no Saturday work. Sweet! However, we also have that term, “undue hardship,” to consider. In the 1970s, the High Court defined the term “undue hardship” as anything that has more than a “de minimus” negative impact on the employer. Ugh! Another word we need to define. This means that, if anyone was inconvenienced, then the employer did not have to grant the request.

All that changed in January 2024 in the ruling on *Groff v. DeJoy*. The Court hit the term “undue hardship” head-on. Now it means that the company must provide the accommodation unless it “would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of its particular business.” *Groff* was a mail carrier whose sincerely held religious belief did not allow him to work Sundays. (Since partnering with Amazon, the post office delivers on Sundays.) The Court agreed that, even though it would impose on his coworkers, disrupt the workplace and workflow, and diminish employee morale, that is not enough to rise to the level of undue hardship: request granted.

We may feel the effects of the new definition of the law as we encounter limited ability to interact with companies that provide goods and services on weekends due to a lack of workers. Be careful booking a flight for Sunday travel. Maybe we will see a shift back to the good ol’ days when everything was closed on Sundays and the only activities available were church and spending time at home with friends and family. Were those the good ol’ days? ■

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

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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COULD tax hikes crack your nest egg?

Our national debt problem became unprecedented long ago, now it's ballooned to \$34 trillion. You are not alone if you think the country's debt could become a headache for you in retirement. Many agree



that one way to tackle the debt is to raise taxes.

While lawmakers have been relatively hesitant to increase tax rates over the past two decades, that philosophy could change. And with the national debt-to-GDP ratio ballooning to its highest point in seven decades, we could be nearing a point where leaders are forced to take action.

Federal income tax rates are still relatively low, historically speaking. For example, between 1982 and 1986, the income tax rates reached as high as 50%. Before that, the top rates reached 70% and as high as 94%, primarily due to World War II. The top bracket

for 2024 is 37%.

The headache comes when you are on the cusp of retirement and lawmakers in Washington pass legislation that changes your tax bracket. If you've been investing in a traditional 401(k) or IRA, this scenario could mean you end up with less money to fund your retirement than you anticipated. That's because these accounts have never been taxed. When you take distributions in retirement, the money is subject to federal income tax rates. That's when that nest egg can crack, and you could send more of your retirement savings to the IRS than you have to, leaving you with less to spend in retirement.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take now to help protect your retirement from the uncertainty of tomorrow. All else being equal, tax-free money is the best type of retirement income. There are three main types of investments that produce tax-free income: life insurance, a Roth IRA or municipal bonds.

So how do you keep the nest egg together?

One way is to reduce taxable income — but don't wait until you are retired. Small changes now can pay off big in retirement, including converting pre-tax money into a Roth account. Qualified distributions from a Roth account are tax-free in retirement. Then you can worry a lot less about what happens with tax brackets in Washington and focus on all of the fun you want to have in retirement.

Like any retirement strategy, tax decisions should be made with a clear understanding of the rules, the impact on your tax situation, and how the strategy fits into your overall retirement vision. Your retirement planner and trusted tax preparer should work together to help you get it right. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006. Sources: Bradford Tax Institute. "History of Federal Income Tax Rates: 1913 – 2023." https://bradfordtaxinstitute.com/free_resources/federal-income-tax-rates.aspx. Accessed May 1, 2023.

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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.

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FITNESS

By Haley Powers-Risdal

Q: Do quick fixes work?



A: We live in a world that is constantly changing. It seems like every time you turn around, there is a newer and quicker way to do things. Every industry is guilty of this, especially the fitness industry. It is not shocking though, if you think about it. Everyone loves seeing quick results. I mean, who wouldn't be enticed by an ad that says, "Lose 30 pounds in two weeks" or "Take this and you will gain 10 pounds of muscle in a week"?

That would be tempting for anyone. If we know deep down that it seems too good to be true, then why do we fall for it? Why do we still have hope that it will work? It is easy and quick. There is one thing about fitness that has been around for years and years that has still held true: hard work. There is no sustainable, quick way to get results. You must show up, put in the work, and fuel your body correctly. There is no way around it. You must work for it. The more you fall for those gimmicks, the more discouraged you will become. The more discouraged you become, the harder it will be for you to be motivated to get back at it. Ultimately, fitness is about discipline, determination and hard work. What route do you want to take? ■

Information provided by Haley Powers-Risdal, certified personal trainer/head coach at Anytime Fitness 255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com.

MEET Stacie Walker

Glad to have made district, community her home



Stacie Walker says she is glad she returned to school to become an educator.

During her freshman year at college, Stacie Walker reconsidered her desire to be a teacher and, instead, earned her college degree in business management and went to work at Wells Fargo. Something kept pulling at her heart though, and she finally decided it was time to pursue a career in education.

“Initially I was going to school for education, but I changed my field my freshman year of college. I always regretted not going into education, because that’s where my heart was,” she says. “I convinced my supportive husband that I needed to go back to school. I knew if I didn’t, I would always have that regret. It wasn’t an easy road with three young children at home, but it was so worth it. We’ve never regretted the decision.”

Walker is now a kindergarten teacher at North Ridge Elementary. She originally envisioned teaching a higher grade, but now she can’t imagine doing anything else. She’s currently in her ninth year teaching some of the youngest learners in the district.

Walker enjoys the Dallas Center Grimes district and community and says it will be her forever home. Her husband grew up and went to school in Grimes, and her daughter is pursuing an elementary education degree and wants to make DCG her home, too, because her mom loves it so much.

“The staff, students and parents are amazing. I love our schools, and everyone is so supportive of one another,” says Walker. “The rewards of being in education are so wonderful. I love kids, and being surrounded by them every single day is the biggest reward.”

Of course, every job has its challenges. But when you have a school district like DCG, where people deeply care about each other, the kids and their families, it makes all of those challenges manageable, she says.

For Walker, Halloween is a highlight of the year.

“I’m like a little kid on Halloween,” she says. “I get so excited when my current and past students come to my house to trick-or-treat. I look forward to it all year. I also want my parents to know that my classroom door is always open. I love having parents visit and volunteer in my room.” ■

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TREATMENTS and therapies for Parkinson's

We recognize Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month in April, the birth month of James Parkinson, who first identified Parkinson's disease symptoms more than 200 years ago. While there is still no known cure, there are many treatments, medications, therapies and support available.



The Parkinson's Foundation recommends a comprehensive, team-based healthcare approach led by a neurologist who specializes in, and has experience treating, movement disorders, including Parkinson's disease. Led by the neurologist, other experts provide treatment, therapy, advice, assistance and oversight of care plans.

Several types of physical therapy exist. Amplitude training, known as Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LVST) BIG treatment, focuses on over-exaggerated physical movements. This can retrain muscles and slow the progression of smaller shuffling movements

known as hypokinesia. With reciprocal patterns, participants make side-to-side and left-to-right movements and sometimes ride stationary recumbent bicycles. Other types of physical therapy include balance work, stretching, flexibility and strength training.

According to the Parkinson's Foundation, the purpose of occupational therapy is to "find ways to match your personal strengths with activities and an environment that will help you reach your goal." Because everyone has different strengths and goals and are in different environments, occupational therapy looks different for each individual.

Not only can Parkinson's create speech and swallowing difficulties, it can affect an individual's awareness and perception of such difficulties. Speech-language pathologists evaluate problems, create strategies, provide exercises to improve speech and strengthen muscles associated with talking and swallowing.

Physical activity and exercise can help maintain and improve mobility, flexibility and balance, as well as addressing depression and constipation.

Popular types of exercise include aerobic activity; strength training; balance, agility and multitasking; and flexibility.

Not sure where to start? The Parkinson's Foundation collaborated with the American College of Sports Medicine to create exercise recommendations for those with Parkinson's.

Healthy food can help improve brain health, ease symptoms and maintain energy. Food can also have a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness of Parkinson's medications. It is important to discuss your diet with your care team to determine what and when to eat to optimize your treatment.

Many resources for addressing Parkinson's exist, including information from the Parkinson's Foundation, the American Parkinson Disease Association and Johns Hopkins Medicine. We encourage anyone dealing with this disease to reach out for help. ■

Note: This is not medical advice. Consult a healthcare professional for medical guidance. This article was written by Cassia for use by Chris Ruzicka, local Director of Sales for Meadowview of Clive, Chris.Ruzicka@CassiaLife.org, 515-644-8740.



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WHO LIKES a planner?

We all have that one friend or family member who shows up for a trip or even a short weekend with a detailed itinerary. The “planner” is made fun of and laughed at by all...and then the trip goes swimmingly with everyone able to relax — or able to pivot when the unexpected occurs. All thanks to the base plan and the lowly “planner.”



Planning in the financial world is too often viewed as intimidating or only for the wealthy. The uncertainty of the future or not being able to lay the “perfect plan” are also often excuses used to have no plan. The one guarantee you get from any plan is that it will not go exactly as forecasted, but having the plan in the first place allows you to define and shift when those deviations occur.

We all need to have plans for:

- **Budgeting:** We are a quarter into 2024, and it is a great time to review your cash inflows and outflows for the first three months of the year. Managing your lifestyle is vital to the remaining parts of your comprehensive plan.

- **Financials:** Whether you are focused on retirement, college, or another large purchase or change in life, financial planning allows you to visualize how you can meet or adjust those goals.

- **Taxes:** Taxes play a major role in long-term planning. Efficiently utilizing the appropriate savings vehicles and distribution strategies can make reaching your goals easier.

- **Investments:** You will want to use different investment vehicles for your varied goals and time horizons — and they may adjust based on your stage in life. There is no single solution to meet all your needs. When selecting investments, focus on your personal situation and tolerances for risk rather than the current news cycle.

- **Insurance:** Assets you have gathered, and your expected income, should be protected against the unexpected.

- **Estate:** The first step is having the right plan in place given your current situation. Reviewing and adjusting that plan as life changes is necessary to have a prudent estate plan.

Each of the plans above needs to work in concert with one another. Without one, the others are less effective. You also need to accept that you are not going to get them all in place this weekend. Pick one, start there, and then move on to the next, adjusting the previous plan as needed. ■

For more information, please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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Citywide Garage Sale and Spring Cleanup

May 2-5 and May 6-7

Grimes residents are invited to participate and host a garage sale from May 2-5. Individuals set their own garage sale hours. Sign up at <https://secure.recl.com/IA/grimes-ia/catalog> and click on the events tab to be included on the map. The City will put a map on social media of participating homes closer to the event, but anyone is welcome to participate without being on the map.

Anything you don't sell, or other items you'd like to get rid of, can be set out on the curb for the Spring Cleanup on your regular collection day of May 6 or 7. Please have your items out to the curb by 6 a.m.

Items that are NOT accepted include appliances, construction items, hazardous waste, tires, yard waste, paint, lawn chemicals or broken glass.

Earth Day Trash Bash

April 20-27
[Earthday.dsm.city](http://earthday.dsm.city)

Earth Day Trash Bash is a collaboration between the cities and citizens of Clive, Des Moines, Johnston, Norwalk, Pleasant Hill, West Des Moines, Boone County Conservation, Polk County Conservation, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Trees Forever, and Des Moines Water Works. Register at the above website.

May Lunch & Learn

Wednesday, May 8,
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Grimes Chamber & Economic Development gives its members the opportunity to meet for networking bi-monthly at its Lunch & Learns and hear speakers regarding Grimes and the metro area. The public is invited. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for nonmembers and walk-ins. Cost is \$15 without lunch. May's Lunch & Learn is sponsored by Erin Lego Coaching & Consulting. To register, visit <https://business.grimesiowa.com/events/details/may-lunch-learn-1856?calendarMonth=2024-05-01>.



Des Moines Makers Market and Bar Hop

April 21

Exile Brewing Co.,
1520 Walnut St., Des Moines
iheartindiemarkets.com

Products will include a wide variety of handmade and vintage goods including original art, home decor, clothing, paper products, metal working, jewelry, soap, candles and more.

Dress For Success Pop-up Sale

April 24-28
Valley West Mall, 1551 Valley W. Drive, West Des Moines
desmoines.dressforsuccess.org

Dress for Success collects clothing donations that are then sorted for interview or on-the-job appropriateness (those are then available for Dress for Success clients to have as they get into the workforce). Those items that aren't useful for those purposes are saved and sold at the annual Pop-up Sale. Special events are on April 24 with the purchase of a ticket; the rest of the event from April 25-28 is free.

Tire Drop Off

May 13-19, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
1700 S.E. Destination Drive

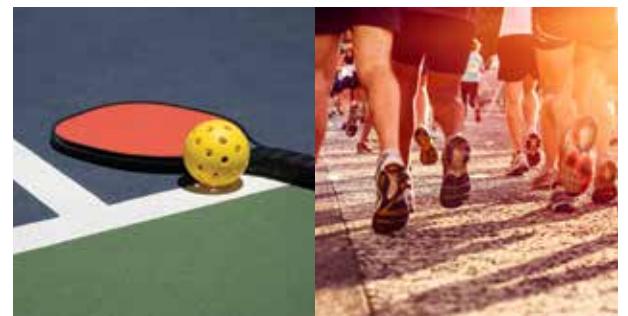
The city has partnered with Metro Waste Authority for a tire drop-off event. Residents can drop off up to five tires free of charge. Tires from tractors and bicycles and solid tires from lawnmowers or golf carts are not accepted. Learn more at <https://www.mwatoday.com/waste-recycling/news/tire-disposal-events/>.



Earth Day at the Brenton Arboretum

25141 260th St., Dallas Center
April 21 from noon to 3 p.m.
thebrentonarboretum.org

Even more fun family activities have been added to this year's popular event. Come and enjoy the arboretum grounds and make an afternoon of exploring and visiting the vendors. A variety of stations will be offered throughout the event including a Kids Planting Station, Selfie Station, OMG Bees with Bee Expert Julia MCGuire, Found Object Bug Craft with Artist Jill Woodward, Experience Nature's Healing with Dennis Kelly, Hot Off The Presses Food Truck, and Erin Huiatt with Des Moines Parent talking about her new book, "100 Things To Do in Des Moines Before You Die." At 1:30 p.m., a special presentation will be made on how to plant a tree with Director Of Horticulture Andy Schmitz.



Earth Day Family 5K Run/Walk and Pickleball Tournament

Fenders Brewing, 212 W. Van Dorn St., Polk City
April 20, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Funds raised at the Polk City Friends of the Parks' annual Earth Day Family 5K Run/Walk and the Pickleball Tournament being held in conjunction with it will go toward costs of resurfacing the tennis and pickleball courts at Miller Park. The event is Saturday, April 20. To register, visit <https://www.polkcityfriendsoftheparks.com/earth-day-5k>. ■

WALKER makes waves in horse community

High school student is an award-winning hackney rider.

Darien Walker first started riding horses around the age of 6. He rode at the barn his grandmother established in Grimes, Heartland Stables, which is now operated by his mom, Amanda Simpson.

“I was born into it,” Walker says.

In the years since he first got on a saddle, the sophomore at Dallas-Center Grimes High School has achieved accolade after accolade for horse and hackney riding. These include the American Hackney Horse Society Junior Exhibitor of the Year Award, the Madison Taylor Pope Sportsmanship Award and the Spirit of the Youth Medallion Award.

A bit lesser-known horse breed, the hackney originated in Great Britain, bred by prosperous farmers seeking to improve the quality and trotting speed of their carriage horses. These elegant, high-stepping horses are popular for



Darien Walker has received numerous awards for horse and hackney riding.



Hackney horses are elegant, high-stepping horses popular for showing in harness events, where Darien Walker excels.

showing in harness events, where Walker excels.

Walker is typically at the barn multiple times throughout the week working with his pony and helping out around the stables.

One of his favorite memories is from his first time showing at the World Championship Horse Show in Kentucky, as well as when he first showed his pony, Bruno.

“The first time showing at the American Royal was definitely a huge part of my show career,” Walker says. “It introduced me to bigger classes and more people. Some of those people were a huge inspiration to me.”

Walker shares that winning at the Iowa State

Fair was a unique experience as well, since he was surrounded by fairgoers in a grandstand.

Moving forward, Walker plans to remain involved with hackneys and continue to show them, even though he’s also busy with his high school track team and the Des Moines Griffins, a local hockey team.

“Being involved in the horse show world has given me confidence in myself and a belonging to a wonderful community,” Walker says. “My mom was my No. 1 supporter from the start, followed by our wonderful barn family and my amazing grandmother who founded Heartland Stables.” ■

CLEAN energy and park improvements

Dallas Center honored for implementation of solar energy.

The City of Dallas Center is taking initial steps to help its residents save money and save the environment in the process, too.

1000 Friends of Iowa, a statewide non-profit organization focused on responsible land use in efforts to protect farmland and natural areas; revitalize neighborhoods, towns and cities; and improve quality of life for future generations, recently announced the winners of the 2024 Best Development Awards during a ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol Rotunda. The awards “honor projects that recognize connections between building and project development and quality of life.”

One of the winners of this year’s awards was the Dallas Center Solar Stage in the Placemaking category.

The Placemaking/Greenspace category spotlights spaces and attractions that combine sustainability, culture, inclusivity of an all-ages population, preservation of open spaces, and creative solutions that engage community members to interact with nature.

The project began when the City of Dallas Center was approached by Red Lion Renewables to discuss installing solar structures at its city facilities, says Dallas Center City Administrator Cindy Riesselman. By October of 2023, solar panels had been installed and were up and running at the following locations in Dallas Center:

- Library, 1308 Walnut St.



Solar panels provide shade for bicyclists and power for nearby city facilities including the stage in the park.

- Park restroom, 1307 Walnut St.
- Maintenance facility, 701 Walnut St.
- City hall, 1502 Walnut St.
- Water treatment plant, 2281 240th St.
- Well 7, 23520 Midland Trail
- Well 9, 23500 Midland Trail
- Well 10, 23500 Midland Trail
- Well 11, 23765 Midland Trail
- Wastewater treatment plant, 2711 250th St.

The move to solar has proven to be beneficial on the wallet, too. “The residents save approximately \$8,000 per year in energy costs,” Riesselman says.

This was just one of the many steps the city has taken. Dallas Center city officials had been looking to reduce the city’s energy costs and create a community gathering area where people could converge for outdoor events. A solar canopy was constructed in Heritage Park and provides clean energy for the library, outdoor stage and amenities hub as well as shade for cyclists and others at the park. It was also designed with cell phone charging and convenience outlets. Riesselman says the city hopes to make additional enhancements with the addition of concrete and stonework, making the park area an amphitheater, and holding events, including live music. ■



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THE IMPORTANCE of connecting to the WRA

Dear community members,

An often overlooked, but vitally important component of our city’s infrastructure revolves around our wastewater management. This has been an area of focus for the city and a common topic among residents for many years. I am excited that we have a long-term solution to an, at times, stinky problem. As board chair for Grimes Chamber and Economic Development and a commercial lender for City State Bank, I view progress like this as a necessity for our current residents and businesses, along with a great step towards allowing continued economic growth for Grimes moving forward.



The decision to connect to the Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) is a testament to our city’s dedication to creating a cleaner, more sustainable and healthier environment in Grimes for generations to come. By investing in sustainable infrastructure, we are allowing our growing community to continue to thrive. Many of you are aware that the current wastewater management site has exceeded its maximum designed capacity and is inadequate to meet the community’s needs. Here are a few facts:

- The existing wastewater treatment plant was opened in the 1970s and, at the time, was located approximately 1 mile north of the city.
- The wastewater treatment plant was designed for a population that many thought Grimes would never have.

What were the options?

- Expand the plant where it is today
- Build a new plant elsewhere in the city of Grimes
- Connect to the regional sewer authority, aka: WRA

After thorough analysis and consideration, the most cost-effective and long-term solution was to connect to the WRA. This project started in 2022 and is nearing completion. This is not a “light switch” transition. The transition is occurring as I am writing this message and will be completed in 2025. This process has many steps including the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment facility. Decommissioning of the existing location will also provide an opportunity to repurpose the existing site, which is centrally located and adjacent to Heritage Elementary.

Grimes is growing and will continue to do so. This project, although underappreciated, expensive and overdue, underscores our city’s commitment to sustainability and progress. By investing in infrastructure, we are safeguarding the wellbeing of our community and ensuring a more efficient approach to this issue for generations to come.

From my perspective, the conversion of our aging wastewater treatment plant to a more sustainable option marks a significant milestone in our city’s journey towards a cleaner, more sustainable future. This is a major step in the right direction for the city of Grimes. I’m unsure of the best way to celebrate this step other than applauding the city of Grimes’ commitment towards growing Grimes in a future-focused manner. ■

Information provided by Adam Bunge, Board Chair, Grimes Chamber and Economic Development.

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BUSINESS Expo

Grimes Business Expo was held March 26 at the Meadowview gym.



Madison Taiber and Halsey Scales - Grimes Chamber and Economic Development



Justin Harris, Imer Gavez and Kendall Davis - NAPA



Shannon Jungman and Jacob Pinyan - Anytime Fitness



Kathy Howey, Jen Green and Lu Anne Gafford - 107.1



Rachel Gai, Kacie Harms, Lizzy Sellner and Ashley Stolze - Yellow Brick Road



Steve Valline and Alex McFarland - Golden Rule Plumbing and Heating



Jake Wisel and Paige Wilson - Comparion Insurance Agency



Keneth Hanson and Priscilla Barger - Crossroads Church



Amber Nelson - Small Town Barkery



Joan Warren - 2 Harts Boutique



Courtney Jennings - Pure Sweat and Float Studio



Mike Levenhagen - The Master Key

OUT & ABOUT



Mya Keer, KaraLee Keer, Cheryl Heid and Jana Schwerdtfeger - Grimes Public Library



Lori Thomas, Dr. Holly Davis and Christy Hammer - Back to Health Chiropractic



Jack Plagge and Bryce Block - City State Bank



Rachel Raibikis, Alison Schilling and Andrea Sabus - Andrea Sabus State Farm Insurance



Jennifer Coughenour and Rita Holtz - Renewal by Andersen



Courtney Ward and Savana Francis - Optimum Chiropractic



Tim Short and Lynn Coleman - Tim Short Edward Jones



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