

WAUKEE

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.

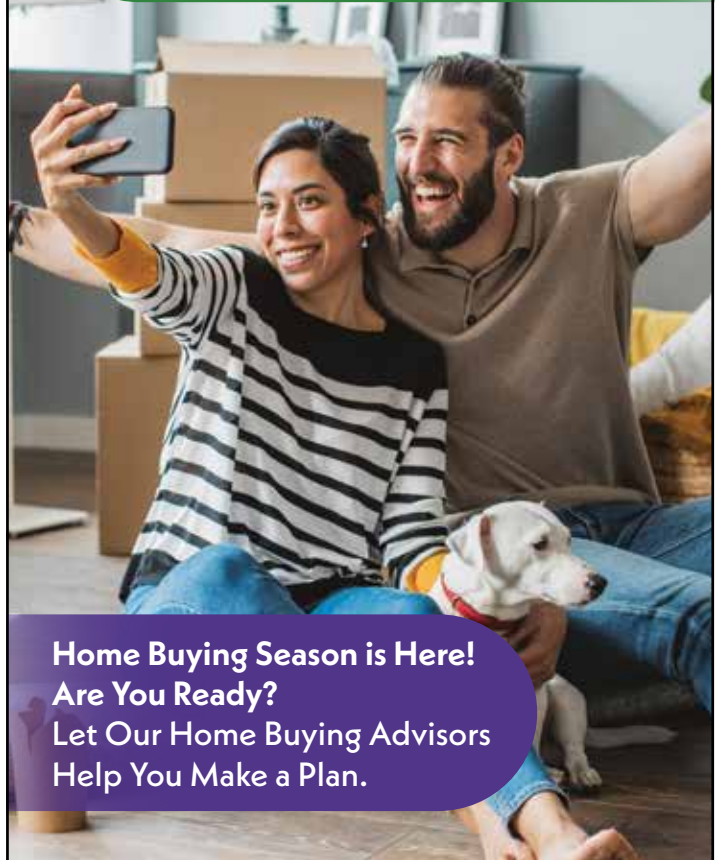
If you are not an organ donor, I hope these stories change your mind and have you consider becoming one. We share details on how you can do so, along with the heart-warming stories of local residents who are deeply grateful for those who already have. Be sure to read the story, but grab some tissues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

April Hansman of Waukee donated a kidney to an anonymous donor in 2022. In return, she has a voucher for a kidney for her daughter if needed. Photo by Jackie Wilson

**Overcoming the odds**

When Patty Wagner of Waukee was born in 1962, she wasn't expected to live long enough to attend kindergarten. She was born with cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that affects lungs, digestion and other body organs. Two of her sisters had already died in infancy from the disease.

She defied the odds when doctors found medications that helped. Her dad bought a trampoline because jumping on it helped loosen the mucus in Patty's lungs.

Patty continued treatments, but her health declined each year as she suffered from frequent lung infections and hospitalizations. She was placed on the lung transplant list and was told it could take up to three years to get a set of lungs, especially since she had a rare blood type. Patty felt she wasn't sick enough, but her doctor disagreed.

"They said that I WAS sick enough," she recalls.

Still, she was hesitant. She knew

only one other person who had a double lung transplant.

"I thought, what if it didn't work? I was scared," she recalls.

Six months after being placed on the transplant list, she received a call late in the evening. Her husband, Bruce, thought it was a prank call and nearly didn't answer the phone. She was told a set of lungs was available, so the couple headed to the University of Minnesota for surgery. Her donor was kept on life support until the surgery was completed. On July 30, 1999, she received a double lung transplant.

Patty heard from Bruce and her sister that the donor was a 24-year-old woman from White Bear Lake. They didn't know what caused her death.

Patty returned to work full-time nearly six months after the surgery. With her new lungs, she did a "complete 180," recovering quickly. She was grateful for the surgery.

"I was in a CF support group, and all my friends died, one by one. I



Patty Wagner of Waukee was the recipient of a double lung transplant after cystic fibrosis damaged her lungs.



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use them as a meter. I wouldn't have made it another two years," she reflects.

Patty mailed a letter to the donor's family and included a poem she had written.

"It says, I'll never forget what you did," she says. "Donor families want to hear from recipients. Some donor families say the organ recipient forgets about them. I tell them to read the poem."

Often, donor recipients have mixed feelings.

"Some who have lung transplants get depressed that someone died so they could live," Patty reflects. "I look at it two different ways. It was tragic. But for her to make something good of a tragedy, I don't focus on her death as much."

She discovered that her lungs were from a woman who had been adopted in the United States from South Korea.

"It's interesting," Patty says. "We all have the same genetics. It shows that we're not that different after all."

She continues to take the same anti-rejection drugs that she has for the past 24 years. She states her health today is very good, despite suffering from various side effects from her

cystic fibrosis. Each July, she celebrates her "transplant-versary."

Patty thinks about her donor frequently and would like to tell her donor family this:

"Thank you so much. Thank you for being a healthy person and giving me the opportunity to save my life. The lungs are perfect," she says. "I'll never forget."

### Giving a miracle

Piper Schrodtt was a typical 2-year-old girl with a zest for life. She'd enter a room smiling and holding her doll when approaching her parents, Michael and Amy. Piper was learning how to talk. Her favorite phrase was "What's up?" with her arms outstretched and a big smile. Her parents say she was smart for her age — and mischievous and rambunctious.

Yet an unexpected illness landed Piper in the hospital. Within 24 hours, doctors told her parents she wasn't expected to live. Michael and Amy were devastated.

While at the hospital, a representative from the Iowa Donor Network approached the couple, gently inquiring if they would consider donating Piper's organs.



Amy and Michael Schrodtt of Waukee made the tough decision to donate their daughter, Piper's, organs after her unexpected death.

"We were asked to make a difficult decision. It was a tough time," says Amy.

The couple agreed through their intense grief.

"We knew we wouldn't get our miracle, so we could give a miracle to someone else," says Michael.

Amy adds, "We knew it was the right thing to do."

After her death in 2011 and donation of her

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## FEATURE

organs, the couple learned about the lives Piper's organs had saved. One of her kidneys went to a 50-year-old woman, her liver to a 2-year-old boy and her small intestines to a 7-month-old.

"We've heard stories — it's good to hear stories of people getting a new lease on life," Michael says.

Amy says some donor families choose to connect with the recipient's family, but they haven't.

"That's OK. That should be acceptable. I hope that they are living a great life now," says Amy.

Throughout the donation process, the couple says the IDN offered tremendous support.

"They treated us with the utmost respect and care. They are great people to work with," says Michael.

Because of their positive experience with the IDN, the couple volunteers at events, sharing their story.

"It's not just about education and the organ donation process; it's a way to heal from grief. It's more of an opportunity to tell our story — that we're not alone. There's a tremendous

amount of grief to work through. There's comfort knowing you're helping people get through their miracle, their gift of life, even though there is a loss," says Michael.

They celebrate Piper's birthday on Sept. 9. Her photos line the walls at home. Their two sons never met their sister, but they honor her memory.

"She was the love of our life," reflects Amy.

The couple say they fully support organ donation.

"There's nothing that you can do to bring back your loved one. The opportunity to give hope — to get that spark of life — we 100% support it," Michael says. "It was the right decision to make."

### Kidney voucher

Parents with children who have chronic disease will often make tremendous sacrifices to ensure their child's survival and ease their pain.

For April Hansman of Waukee, that meant donating her kidney — but not to her daughter. Instead, she donated it to someone completely unknown to her in hopes of getting a kidney for her daughter if she needed one.

## 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.

April's daughter, Autumn, was born a "preemie" at 27 weeks and consequently suffered numerous medical challenges, including epilepsy and learning disabilities.

When Autumn was 11, she was diagnosed with stage 2 chronic kidney disease. April was told she might need a kidney at some point, but not yet.

"As a mom, you want to fix your kids. I couldn't do that," she recalls.

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Since she wasn't a match for her daughter, she wanted to help someone else. She discovered *Tori's Angels* — a nonprofit that helps kids with life-threatening medical challenges. She found Cooper, a 1-year-old boy who needed a kidney.

Testing revealed she was a match. She was set to donate to Cooper when she found out about a University of Iowa kidney voucher program.

"I learned that, if you donate anonymously, you get a voucher for a kidney if needed. However, I wasn't eligible because it wasn't going to an anonymous donor," she explains.

After a final test, she found a certain aspect of her kidney didn't suit Cooper after all.

"I was heartbroken," she says.

In March 2022, she got a call from the University of Iowa that her kidney was a match for an anonymous recipient. She completed surgery, donating her kidney.

"I had no idea who it went to. I haven't heard from them since then," she says. Ironically, when she was in the hospital with her surgery, Cooper was also getting a kidney from another donor at the same hospital.

In return for her kidney, she received a "kidney voucher," from the National Kidney Registry, which means her name goes to the top of the list if her daughter ever needs a kidney.

April recovered easily and knows her body functions well with one kidney. She says her daughter was her inspiration.

"It started with Autumn," she says. "I can't do anything about her — but I can do something. You can do good and help others."

To commemorate the kidney donation, she named her donated

**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, visit [www.iowadonornetwork.org](http://www.iowadonornetwork.org).**

kidney, Gertrude, and her remaining kidney, Bertha. She had both names inked in tattoo on her arm in her kids' handwriting.

She says since she wasn't a match for Cooper but instead got a kidney voucher, it was a spiritual thing.

"It was a cosmic connection of sorts. Without Cooper sharing their story, I would never have thought about donating," she explains.

Autumn recommends people "be the good" and help when they can.

"It is strange not knowing where the kidney is or where they are now," she reflects. "I'd do it again in a heartbeat. It's so much bigger than us physically — it's on a spiritual level. It was incredibly rewarding." ■

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## LIBRARY

By Sam Bedford

# STOCK UP at the Waukee Public Library book sale

The 2024 book sale, organized by the Waukee Public Library Friends Foundation (WPLFF), is on Saturday, May 18, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the library's front program room. You'll find gently used books, movies, magazines, audiobooks and more at a deep discount. Adult books, DVDs and audiobooks will be \$2. Music CDs will be \$1. Children's books and magazines will be 50 cents.

Get early access to the thousands of items at the pre-sale by becoming a Friends Foundation donor member. The early bird sale is from 6-7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 17.

The library is accepting limited book donations and will only take adult fiction books three years old or newer, any children's books and audiobooks. All items must be in good, sellable condition. Everything else will not be accepted due to limited space.

The mission of the Waukee Friends Foundation is to support and enhance the programs and services of the Waukee Public Library through volunteerism and by providing for the ongoing and long-term financial needs of the library. They are currently fundraising for an outreach van so the library can serve more of the community beyond its four walls.

To find out more about the Waukee Public Library Friends Foundation, go to [waukeepubliclibrary.org](http://waukeepubliclibrary.org).

### Programs and events

Most events require advanced registration and can be viewed at [waukeepubliclibrary.org/upcoming-events](http://waukeepubliclibrary.org/upcoming-events).

- **Art Gallery Exhibit:** "Glimpses of Life," Jerald Steele, May 1-30.
- **Helping Hands Supply Drive:** During the month of May, the library will be collecting items to benefit the Young Women's Resource Center. You can find a list of needed supplies online or at the front desk where you can also drop off donations.

### Kids

- **My Dolly and Me,** Friday, May 10, 4 p.m. Bring your favorite 18-inch doll or small stuffed animal for a special storytime and craft. Kids will also leave with a gift to take home. Registration required.

### Teens

- **Summer Volunteer Training,** May 6-8, various times. The Waukee Public Library needs volunteers during June and July to help with summer programs. After attending the training session, students will receive a link to sign up for times to volunteer over the summer. Registration required.

### Adults

- **Lotus Lantern Workshop Online,** Sunday, May 5, 2 p.m. Celebrate YeonDeungHoe (the Lotus Lantern Festival) with the Korean Spirit and Culture Promotion Project in this live Zoom talk. They'll teach you step-by-step how to make a beautiful lotus flower lantern using colored paper and a pre-made wire frame. You'll also learn about Korea's unique history and culture by watching a short documentary film. Registration required.

### Multi-Age

- **Reading Adventure,** May 31-June 5, various times. Explore a variety of activity stations inspired by the world of books and their genres (like history and fantasy). Kids will dig for ancient artifacts, pin the horn on a unicorn and more. For all ages. Registration not required. ■

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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](https://bradfordtaxinstitute.com/free_resources/federal-income-tax-rates.aspx). Accessed May 1, 2023.

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# DO YOU need to update your will or trust?

It is a good idea to review your estate planning documents periodically. Through a strategic analysis of your documents, you can ensure that your loved ones continue to be provided for appropriately. There are certain major life events that require you to do a legal check-up.



- **Changes to your family:** Births, deaths, marriages, and other family changes are among the most common reasons for making revisions to Wills, Trust, and powers of attorney.
- **Changes to your financial circumstances:** Your will or trust should reflect your current financial situation. Past plans may no longer be appropriate due to changes in the value of your assets or income.

- **Have the right executor:** Your executor or trustee will help settle your affairs. If your plans were made some time ago, the person you named may no longer be able to serve or may no longer be the right person for the job.
- **Provisions for children:** If your children are beneficiaries, you may wish to delay their inheritance so they receive money when they are older and better able to manage assets. If you have nominated a guardian to care for minor children, you want to ensure that the agent is still willing and able to assist you.
- **Loved ones with different needs:** Over time, the needs of your heirs may change. Age or illness may require restructuring your estate plan to provide asset protection.
- **Recently moved to Iowa:** Each state has its own laws governing the settlement of estates. Your will or trust may have been drafted under the laws of your former state of residence. You

may wish to have them reviewed to be sure they are appropriate under the laws of the state of Iowa.

- **Real estate in another state:** If you own real estate in another state, the laws of that state may apply to its disposition. You also have the potential for probate in two different states, doubling the time and expense of settling your affairs.

With thoughtful and periodic reviews of your will or trust, you can make certain that your estate planning documents reflect your current situation and goals. Make an appointment with an experienced estate planning attorney to help you update your estate plan. ■

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

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# WHITE supports veterans who risked their lives

Volunteers for VFW Auxiliary and VA center

Beverly White of Waukee began volunteering with the VFW Auxiliary, supporting veteran groups, since her husband, Danny White, was a Vietnam War veteran. She also volunteers with the Veteran's Administration (VA) center at Southridge Mall.



If you think the name Danny White sounds familiar, you're correct. The Waukee VFW Post 11517 was recently renamed Danny White Waukee VFW Post 11517 in honor of White, who died of cancer associated with Agent Orange. White was a post, district and state commander who revived the Waukee post. He was also a police officer with Waukee and Winterset.

When the VFW announced they were renaming the post after Danny, Beverly was shocked.

"I was blown away. I never dreamed they would do this for him," she says.

Beverly has been a long-time volunteer with the VFW Auxiliary and learned that the VA Hospital in Des Moines needed volunteers.

She works about six hours a week with the VA Clinic at Southridge Mall. Part of her job is to send letters to veterans, reminding them of their appointments. She also does other odd jobs around the clinic, wherever



Travis Gaule, Edward Jones, presents a Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Beverly White.

help is needed. She'll coordinate Christmas gifts, food bank items and offer birthday bags, which include candles, cake mix and decorations for those who can't afford it.

Beverly says helping veterans and current military is like helping family members.

"People depend on each other," she explains. "When spouses get injured or sick, it's like another family member."

The VFW also promotes democracy and "random acts of patriotism" among young kids. The VFW sponsors an essay contest and scholarships for kids, with the winner going to Washington, D.C. The youth program is important for kids to learn about patriotism at an early age.

"The kids are the backbone of our country. Kids need to know the history of what and who to honor and how the country is free because of those who have served our country," she reflects.

Danny White VFW members are often present at the Waukee Farmer's Market. If kids recite the pledge of allegiance, they get a flag and a sticker.

In addition to the VA centers, help is needed for veterans. Beverly cites examples of how Waukee residents can help.

"One young man built a shed and another helped with a veteran memorial at a local cemetery," she says.

They send care packages to military members overseas and offer a winter coat drive. Drivers are needed to give veterans rides to the VA hospital, clinic or the Veteran's Home in Marshalltown.

"When the veterans get visitors or treat bags at the hospital, their faces light up. Lots of times they don't see anyone," she says.

Beverly is happy to volunteer.

"They served for me, risking their lives for my freedom," she reflects.

"It's important to return the favor." ■

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# 100 WOMEN Who Care

Giving program benefits local nonprofits.

A simple giving program run by Des Moines area women has benefitted more than 50 nonprofits, giving \$750,000 to charities since its inception.

Three women, Sue Kenny, Liz Kennedy and Doty Thurston, launched 100+ Women Who Care Des Moines in 2010. They had heard about the concept in another state. They brought it to Iowa, asking their friends to donate.

Membership includes giving funds to nonprofits. Members pledge to donate money at least four times a year. The amounts vary over the year. President Jessie Phillips of Waukee says they used to have a requirement of a \$100 donation per quarter.

“We eliminated that requirement and wanted to be more welcoming to others,” she explains. “Yet, it opened it up to even greater donations.”

Most women donate between \$25 to \$1,000 a quarter, averaging about \$10,000 per quarter. The group chooses three to four nonprofits a year. Members give short presentations during a meeting about the nonprofit of their choice. Or, a representative from the nonprofit will present information.

After hearing various pitches at the meeting, members vote on who to give the money to. Past recipients include Joppa, Dorothy’s House and Bidwell, as well as the Waukee Area Christian Services food pantry.

“It’s kind of like a Shark Tank, because the one with the most votes is awarded the money,” she says.

Nonprofits that don’t get enough votes can try again at another meeting.

Phillips joined in 2017 while she was working for Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa. She wanted to obtain funding for her organization and was awarded it.

“I fell in love with the idea,” she recalls. “Especially the nonprofit impact. It’s easy funding for a nonprofit.”

She says the organizations are grateful for the assistance.

“Funding is so impactful. We don’t have to write out grant reports. They don’t have a bunch of hoops to jump through,” she explains.

Phillips became president in 2023. The rest of the members of the board of directors are Amy Eilers, Mackenzie Walters and Kris Winter.

Phillips says that 100 Women is crucial to the Des Moines metro.

“I think it’s important, as we keep the work in our communities. Nonprofits are the backbone — they keep people fed and healthy. They do the most important work. It’s vital for us to take care of each other,” says Phillips.

She encourages local women to join.

“It’s an easy, low commitment. You don’t have to get dressed up to go to a gala. We welcome any new members,” she says. “It’s a fun group.”

For more information, visit [www.100womenwhocaredsm.com](http://www.100womenwhocaredsm.com). ■



Jessie Phillips, left, presents a check to Rachelle Little, who accepts on behalf of the Raise the Bar Initiative.

# SPRING cleaning tips

As spring approaches, it’s a good idea for seniors to take care of their homes to make sure they’re safe and comfortable. Start by going through each room and getting rid of things you don’t need anymore. This helps clear up space and makes it easier to move around without tripping over stuff.

Then, focus on preventing falls, which are common among seniors. Secure loose rugs, clear away clutter, and make sure there’s enough light, especially in darker areas. It’s also important to check things like smoke detectors and electrical outlets regularly to make sure they’re working properly and reduce the risk of accidents.

Incorporating accessibility enhancements may further optimize home safety and ease of mobility for seniors. Consider making some changes to your home to make it easier to get around, like adding handrails or grab bars in the bathroom. And don’t forget to have a plan in case of emergencies, with clear evacuation routes and basic supplies like flashlights and first aid kits.

So, as you dive into your spring-cleaning routine, remember it’s about more than just sprucing up your home. It’s about creating a safe, comfortable space where you can thrive and enjoy the beauty of the season ahead with peace of mind. ■

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




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-Anita, Resident of Attivo Trail

  
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# WAUKEE PD achieves national accreditation

The Waukee Police Department was awarded national accreditation on Saturday, March 23, by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. The Waukee Police Department joins only 10 other law enforcement agencies across the state of Iowa to obtain the accreditation.

Following a multi-year self-assessment phase and site-based assessment of community engagement, policy, procedures, equipment and facilities by CALEA assessors, Waukee Police Chief Chad McCluskey and Accreditation Manager Abbey Christensen attended the CALEA conference in Montgomery, Alabama, recently. Each agency being reviewed goes before CALEA's 21-member Board of Commissioners where the commission reviews all findings and determines the agencies' accreditation status.

The evening of the hearing, during the celebration banquet, CALEA President Marcus Brown and Executive Director Craig Hartley awarded the Waukee Police Department with



accreditation, signifying excellence in public safety and commitment to community. This is Waukee Police Department's first award of national accreditation.

Waukee Police Chief Chad McCluskey said, "Achievement of national accreditation is the culmination of over two years of intensive efforts by our accreditation manager, Abbey

Christensen, with the support of our entire team, city administration, and our elected officials. National accreditation reinforces our commitment to excellence in policing and demonstrates our commitment to setting the standard for law enforcement. I am extremely proud of the efforts of Abbey and our team in achieving this goal." ■



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# A DALLAS County centenarian

Pitsenbarger celebrates birthday with special guest Simon Estes.

Darlene Pitsenbarger experienced a milestone this April that few people attain — turning 100 years old. The centenarian says she didn't do anything special to make it to 100. She just lived one day at a time.

Darlene grew up on a farm near Waukee.

"The Amazon place is on that land now," she says. "When I was a small girl, I remember that highway as a gravel road. I remember because I fell out of our car onto it and got a bloody nose."

She attended first and second grade in Waukee and rode the bus.

"When my sister was big enough for school, there were enough kids for a country school. I finished grade school there," Darlene recalls. "We walked to the one room school on the railroad tracks, where the bike trail is now. We would try to see how far we could go on the rail without falling off. Our grade school had 10-15 kids. After that, I attended the Waukee public schools and graduated from the old high school in 1941."

Darlene was active in school music activities.

"Music was always an important part of my family. We took piano lessons, and most everyone played an instrument. I did more singing than playing."

As a young woman, she moved to Redfield to teach and made it her hometown. She has called it home for more than 75 years. She married her late husband, an active farmer, and she continued teaching in Dallas Center, Linden and Redfield. When she welcomed a son and daughter, she took time off to raise her children. Later, she returned to teaching.

Darlene says it's hard to share everything about life over a 100-year span. However, she's still making the most out of life. She lives on her own, maintaining independence in most of her daily activities.

"I don't drive anymore," she shares. "When you live this long, you learn to adapt. I have good neighbors who check on me and help me get where I need to go." Darlene holds that, if you quit doing something, you won't be able to do it, and that is her reasoning for being independent as long as she's able to do so.

She grows a garden every year that boasts a variety of flowers and vegetables, along with an apple tree of which she happily shares the bounty.

"I've got to have food for my body and food for my soul. The flowers are food for my soul," she says.

Darlene celebrated her birthday with a party of more than 200 friends and family. Special guest Simon Estes made an appearance and sang "Happy Birthday," much to her delight and surprise.

"Simon's been one of my favorite singers. I've gone to his concerts for many years and always admired him. Never did I expect anyone to ask him to come to my party. My granddaughter, Liz, and her husband arranged for him to come, and he graciously agreed," she says.

Her advice to all: "Find something you really want to do and put your heart in it. Do what you know is right. You can only live one day at a time." ■



Darlene Pitsenbarger recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Among the guests was Simon Estes, who sang "Happy Birthday" to her.

## GRAND OPENING!

Saturday, April 27 • 11am-2pm

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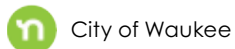
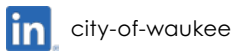




# City of Waukee Bulletin APRIL 2024

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

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## City Council Approves FY 2025 Budget



On April 15, the Waukee City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2025 budget as well as the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The City's property tax rate was lowered from \$13.05 to \$12.95 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. The \$148.1 million budget includes basic operating expenditures of \$23.9 million, business/proprietary expenses of \$34.7 million, debt service expenditures of \$13.6 million and capital improvement expenditures of \$69.7 million.

Highlights of the CIP include new neighborhood parks in Spring Crest and Painted Woods, updates to the Centennial Park playground, phase 1 of the extension project for University Avenue, construction of the new West Area Trunk sewer, a new Public Safety facility, improvements to T Ave, the Prairie Rose Greenway Trail, new water tower, Central Iowa Water Works (CIWW) capacity expansion at Saylorville, purchase of a new fire engine and an

asphalt overlay on the Sugar Creek Municipal Golf Course parking lot.

The City Council approved increases to the stormwater and solid waste rates. The changes will net a 2.1 percent monthly billing increase for the average Waukee household. Visit [Waukee.org/Finance](http://Waukee.org/Finance) for more details.

Useful resources:

- [Waukee.org/Tax](http://Waukee.org/Tax) outlines how the City spends its portion of property tax revenues on the services we all depend on. You'll also find a recording of our Property Tax 101 session and a guide to understanding the tax statements mailed by the county in March.
- In her annual State of the City address on February 29, Mayor Clarke covered highlights of 2023 and projects in progress for 2024. Watch the video at [Waukee.org/StateoftheCity](http://Waukee.org/StateoftheCity).

### Dates to Know

**Bingo**  
Friday, May 4 at 1 p.m.  
Waukee Community Center

**Regular City Council Meetings**  
May 6 & 20 at 5:30 p.m.  
Waukee City Hall and Zoom

**Waukee Firefighters Association Pancake Breakfast**  
Saturday, May 18 from 7-11 a.m.  
Public Safety Building



### Scholarship for Rec Programs

Do you want to enroll your kid in a Waukee Parks & Recreation program but the cost isn't in the budget? Our Play It Forward program may be able to help. Waukee residents 18 years old or younger who qualify for free or reduced lunch at school (or an equivalent financial aid program) can receive 50% off the cost of up to two Waukee Parks & Recreation programs for the calendar year. Learn more and apply at [Waukee.org/PlayItForward](http://Waukee.org/PlayItForward).



### Certify Lawn Irrigation Meters

Portable irrigation meters can help save you money on sewer charges for your water bill if you frequently irrigate your lawn and garden. If you already have a meter, get your meter certified now to stay eligible for credits on your account. Fill out the form at [Waukee.org/UtilityBilling](http://Waukee.org/UtilityBilling) or bring your meter to City Hall (230 W. Hickman Road) on a weekday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. To purchase a meter, contact [WaukeeUtilities@Waukee.org](mailto:WaukeeUtilities@Waukee.org).



### Volunteers Needed for Safety City

The Waukee Police Department needs volunteers to help with the annual Safety City program for kids. Sessions run June 10-14, June 17-21 and June 24-28 with camps in the morning and in the afternoon. Ages 14 and up can volunteer for one or more sessions at [Waukee.org/SafetyCity](http://Waukee.org/SafetyCity).



### National Safe Digging Month

April is National Safe Digging Month. This observance serves as a reminder to all people who excavate or dig to dial Iowa One Call at 811 or visit [IowaOneCall.com](http://IowaOneCall.com) at least 48 hours before digging to have the approximate location of utility lines marked. Planting trees, installing a fence, etc.? Dial 811 beforehand so you can avoid knocking out utility service, injuring yourself or facing fines.



Don't forget the permit! If you're adding a fence, deck, shed or other structure, you may need a permit. Learn more at [Waukee.org/BuildingPermits](http://Waukee.org/BuildingPermits). If you're part of an HOA, be sure to check your covenants for any requirements before starting work.

### Safety Tips for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

- If riding on streets, always ride with traffic flow and follow the rules of the road.
- When walking where there is no sidewalk, always stay on the left-hand side of the road and walk facing the traffic flow.
- Watch for items on the road or trail that might make you swerve or fall.
- Watch for turning traffic at every intersection.
- If walking or riding at dusk or night, always wear reflective gear.
- Wear a helmet at all times when cycling.
- Yell "on your left" when passing someone on the trail, so they can keep to the side of the path.



## MAKE SURE YOU ARE COUNTED

Did you know that cities get state and federal funding based on the number of residents they have? Help your community get the funding we need for roads, schools and more by responding to the Special Census. Watch your mailbox for a letter from the U.S. Census Bureau with instructions on how to complete your census form online. In June and July, field representatives will knock on doors to help ensure any residences that do not complete the online census form are not missed. Find census job openings and more details on the Waukee census at [Waukee.org/SpecialCensus](http://Waukee.org/SpecialCensus).



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancelations.

## Fun Day Trips for Seniors

Waukee Parks and Recreation has fun day trips planned for seniors to get together to explore and have some fun.

• **The next National WWI Museum and Memorial Day Trip is July 10.** The Liberty Memorial Association (LMA) formed shortly after World War I to create a lasting monument to the men and women who had served in the war. In 1919, The LMA and citizens of Kansas City raised more than \$2.5 million in just 10 days. This is equivalent to more than \$40 million today. Join us as we visit America's official WWI Museum and Memorial, home to the most comprehensive collection of WWI objects in the world. The Liberty Memorial Tower has a 217-foot-high, open-air observation deck where you can view Kansas City from up high. You have the option to climb the tower or just enjoy the rest of the museum. To reach the top of the tower, guests ride an elevator and climb 45 steps. The registration fee includes transportation via charter bus, a tour of the museum and lunch. Cost is \$114 and is leaving from Waukee Community Center. Register by June 7. Save your spot today at [Waukee.org/Registration](http://Waukee.org/Registration).

• **Nothing Compares to the Iowa State Fair Day Trip, Aug. 14.** Do you like taste-testing food on a stick or seeing the Butter Cow at the Iowa State Fair? How about strolling through the homemade crafts and quilts? Take a trip to the 2024 Iowa State Fair for Older Iowans Day. Don't worry about fighting traffic because you'll be dropped off at gate 15. The fee includes transportation and admission to the world-famous fair. Cost is \$25, and the bus leaves from Waukee Community Center. Register by Aug. 5 at [Waukee.org/Registration](http://Waukee.org/Registration).

## Bingo

Sundays, 3-6 p.m.  
Kenny's Garage, 605  
Ashworth Drive, Waukee

Enjoy Bingo Sunday evenings  
at Kenny's Garage.



## Tuesday Night Trivia

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

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

## Citywide Garage Sale

Saturday, April 27,  
7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Citywide Garage Sale is not sponsored by the city but is a designated day for residents to join many others in hosting garage sales at their Waukee homes if they choose to do so. There is no facilitated flyer or website to track garage sales; however, Facebook Marketplace is often used to promote them.



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# EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Be sure to check for cancelations.

## Mother's Day breakfast buffet and bake sale

Sunday, May 12, 8 a.m. until noon  
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Enjoy a delicious Mother's Day breakfast which includes biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and "all you can eat" pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee for \$10 — children younger than 10 \$5. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Proceeds support the Elks' Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and veteran activities.



## Bowling events

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

Various parties are planned with registration required two days prior. Themes are: May 12, A-May-Zing; June 16, Summer Kick-Off; July 14, Celebrate America; Aug. 18, Back To School Luau; Sept. 15, Festive Fall Fun; Oct. 20, Halloween; Nov. 17, Turkey Time; Dec. 15, Ugly Sweater Holiday. On Tuesday, Dec. 31, 11 am. To 1 p.m. is the Countydown to Noon Year's Eve Party. For more information and registration, visit [warriorlanes.com](http://warriorlanes.com).

## Michael Jefry Stevens and Christian Howes

Sunday, May 5, 2 p.m.  
Caspé Terrace, 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee

Over the past 40 years pianist/composer Michael Jefry Stevens has been associated with some of the most important figures in modern jazz. Ranked among the top violinists in jazz, Christian Howes has demonstrated his virtuosity and creativity on numerous recordings since the early 2000s. As evidenced by their 2023 release, "Precipice," when you combine these two improvisers, you end up with pure beauty and joy in every note. Tickets for Jazz at Caspé Terrace concerts are \$30 each and can be ordered by calling 515-279-6452 or emailing [abegold1951@gmail.com](mailto:abegold1951@gmail.com). You can also purchase tickets at [jazzatcaspe.weebly.com](http://jazzatcaspe.weebly.com). Seating is limited to 130 so reservations are encouraged. Caspé Terrace is owned and operated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines.

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## Dress For Success Pop-up Sale

April 24-28  
Valley West Mall, 1551 Valley West Drive, West Des Moines  
[desmoines.dressforsuccess.org](http://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) and those items that aren't useful for those purposes are saved and sold at the annual Pop-up Sale.

## Live Music

Wednesdays in May, 6-9 p.m.  
Mickey's Irish Pub, 50 S.E. Laurel St., Waukee  
Enjoy live music: **May 4** - Brad Seidenfeld, **May 8** - Tony Bohnenkamp, **May 15** - David Watson, **May 22** - Summer Patio Party with Brian Congdon.

## Central Iowa Wind Ensemble presents 'Lollipops & Posies'

Sunday, May 5, 3 p.m.  
Franklin Events Center, 4801 Franklin Ave., Des Moines

Step into a world of musical brilliance and artistic triumph with the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble's grand season finale concert, "Lollipops and Posies." Get ready to be mesmerized by an enchanting afternoon filled with captivating melodies, exhilarating performances, and a celebration of talent that will leave you in awe. The concert features the iconic band piece "Lincolnshire Posy" by Percy Grainger and a selection of familiar popular themes from movies and Broadway. Admission is free but tickets are required and are available at [www.ciwe.org](http://www.ciwe.org).



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 bear witness to more than 50 hand-crafted creations that light up the zoo. The illuminated Asian mythical creatures create plenty of photo opportunities for families. ■

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## FROM the mat to the ice

Waukee's Jamyambaatar, 11, having success skating competitively.

Waukee's Michelle Jamyambaatar can thank, of all things, a broken toe for all the success she has been experiencing on the ice skating rink in recent years.

Six years ago, Michelle didn't know a thing about the sport of ice skating. Gymnastics was her thing. But one night, while practicing a handstand at home, she had the unfortunately painful displeasure of breaking her toe. Just like that, she'd had enough of gymnastics and decided to try ice skating.

"At first she had mixed feelings," says her mother, Adyanaa Jamyambaatar. "There were more than a few times in the beginning when she felt frustrated and wanted to quit as she wasn't advancing as fast as she hoped. In the long run, the sport taught her to persevere and understand that hard work pays off."

Michelle has taken to the sport. So much so that, since she began competing in 2021, she has won more than 25 medals. Last year, she and her family traveled to Austin, Texas, for the Excel National Festival to compete against more than 750 participants. Michelle did well, capturing third place in her compulsory event. In a recent competition in Omaha, Michelle took first place in Pre-Preliminary Level Showcase.

Since moving from South Dakota a year and a half ago, where Michelle used to skate for Sioux Falls Figure Skating Club, the family has found an equally welcoming home in the Iowa Figure Skating Academy run by Igor Velikanov and Elena Tobiash.

"She has advanced as a skater so much since then thanks to all her coaches," Adyanaa says. "Their way of teaching is a little different, and Michelle thrives in it. It has been wonderful to see her grow as a human and a skater and fall in love with the sport. Seeing her master some hard elements such as her axel jump was kind of scary, too. As a parent, you're always worried they are going to get hurt. But after every fall, she gets up and tries again and again until she masters it. We are incredibly proud of her and absolutely love watching her do her thing."

Michelle's success has her hungry for more. She has plans to pass all her Skating Skills (Moves in the Field) tests within the next three years, her mother says, all with one goal in mind.

"Her big dream is to be on the U.S. National Team and compete in the Olympics," Adyanaa says.

The Iowa Figure Skating Academy will hold its annual spring show — "Swifties On Ice" — on May 18 at the Metro Ice Sport Facility at 5100 72nd St., Urbandale. Admission is free. ■



Michelle Jamyambaatar has won more than 25 medals since she began ice skating six years ago.

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# MEET Emily Provenzale

A helping hand at lunch and recess



Emily Provenzale, pictured with Kathryn Wuollet, is a lunch and recess associate at Sugar Creek Elementary School and enjoys working with elementary students.

Emily Provenzale grew up in Iowa City and attended the University of Iowa before teaching third grade in Kansas City. She and her husband then moved to the Des Moines area in 2012. After being a stay-at-home mom for several years, Provenzale thought that being a lunch and recess associate would be a good way to get back into working with the schools.

She is now in her second year as an associate with the Waukee Community School District and currently works at Sugar Creek Elementary School. She says she enjoys working with students at the elementary school level because they have stories to tell and have questions about everything.

"I love working at Sugar Creek because of the positive atmosphere and collaboration I see every day. The teachers, associates and administrators consistently communicate clear expectations to students," Provenzale says.

For Provenzale, a typical day as a lunch/recess associate includes supervising students in the lunchroom, where she helps them find their seats and open items. She also supervises several recesses, which she says is a fun time. For example, last year, her students got a GaGa Ball pit, and Provenzale says it has been fun to see the students use it to play.

"As a lunch/recess associate, it's sometimes difficult to know your role. It's nice when you can get respect from the students, and they start to trust you to help them. The downside of my job is being outside in the sometimes brutal Iowa winters," she says.

In her free time, Provenzale likes spending time with her family, which includes their golden doodle, Hazel. She also enjoys hiking and reading. This summer, she plans to spend lots of quality time with her three boys and take a vacation to the beach. ■

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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).

## HEALTH

By Dr. Jason Brown

### ORAL cancer awareness month



The month of April is a beautiful time of year. We begin to see more sunlight, the grass is getting greener, and some celebrate Easter with egg hunts and other fun activities. April is also Oral Cancer Awareness month. It is an important topic in dentistry, and dental visits incorporate soft tissue and oral cancer screening for early detection of any abnormal areas that may require further investigation to rule out potential cancer. These screenings are a crucial time to detect any early abnormalities since this may only take place one to two times per year.

For dental professionals, the mouth is divided into two separate regions: the oral cavity and oral pharynx. Each area can be subject to potential cancerous lesions and should be examined at each dental visit. Your dentist will often ask questions regarding tobacco and alcohol use or history of HPV infection, as these are high risk factors for causing oropharyngeal cancer. Signs of potential cancerous lesions include but are not limited to: white or red patches on the gums or inside cheeks, lumps or swelling which cause dentures to not fit properly or cause difficulty swallowing, and, finally, pain or soreness in the throat. Your dentist will be able to evaluate potential lesions that may require a biopsy or referral to a specialist to determine if further treatment is necessary. ■

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

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## 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 Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681



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## 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 515-415-1550.

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# WELDING artworks

Zimmerman keeps busy with his many hobbies, including creating metal sculptures.

Even in retirement, there is not enough time in one day for Waukee's Steve Zimmerman. He is a doer by nature. If he is not fixing things around the house, mowing the yard, or taking care of Maverick — the German shepherd — he is likely riding his 10-speed bike, golfing or riding horses with his veteran's club. Or at least that is the case in the summertime. When the colder months come around, Zimmerman is all hands on deck for his latest project.

"I always wanted to learn how to weld," he says. "I was just fascinated by that, and I was around it as a kid."

One of Zimmerman's Vietnam buddies knew how to weld. Growing up in the same town, he admired how he could brilliantly make or fix anything. In retirement, Zimmerman figured, why not give it a shot. After all, he only needed a few pieces of updated equipment.

Earlier this year, Zimmerman recruited the help of a few neighbors to install his latest creation.

Now, as community members are driving south on Westgate Drive towards Grant Regan Elementary, they are greeted into the neighborhood by two steel dancers. The man hoists the woman high in the air, recreating the scene from "Dirty Dancing." Her arms extend out to welcome drivers into the development. Placed upon an elevated springboard — at just the right amount of tension — they appear as though they dance in the wind. At night, a light illuminates them in the darkness.

The dancers join two other sculptures in Zimmerman's yard. Near the front door is an abstract piece made up of different-sized steel tubes arranged in an incomplete circle. The other piece is another abstract one. This time, sharp 90-degree angles form to make what appears to be a disassembled 3D cube.

As eye-catching as it sounds, it took Zimmerman's neighbors a while to notice the newest addition. He remembers one of his busiest neighbors coming by to announce her discovery.



Steve Zimmerman's latest art work is a pair of dancers that seem to dance in the wind.

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## WHERE WE LIVE

“She came running across the driveway, and she said, ‘When did you put that up? And I said, ‘Oh, two weeks ago or more.’”

But who can blame her? Life’s duties, responsibilities, even hobbies and passions can get in the way of smelling the roses. Even Zimmerman admits he would like to make more time for himself.

“Last year, I was so consumed with (the project),” he says. “I didn’t ride my 10-speed at all. I only golfed once, and I took the one trip on my Harley... I don’t want to do that this year.”

He will find himself waking up at 4 a.m. with an idea for his next project. However, Zimmerman does his best to take life one day at a time.

“When we’re finished today, I’ll be out in the garage. I got a couple of things I want to do. And if I don’t get them done today, there’s tomorrow,” he says. ■



Steve Zimmerman is enjoying welding in his retirement and creates works of art for his yard.

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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](http://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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# OUT & ABOUT

# RIBBON Cutting

Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Divine Nail Bar, 1462 S.E. University Ave., on March 11.



Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Divine Nail Bar, 1462 S.E. University Ave., on March 11.



Jessica Taylor-Fink and Amy Ganoe



Tom Lam and Vicki Davis



Nguyen Do, Julie Huynh, Jenny Ngo and Tom Lam



Kelly Troxel, Amber Rhoades and Megan Watt



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## OUT & ABOUT

# GROUND Breaking

A groundbreaking was held for Unleashed Pets in Waukee on March 28.



The public was invited to the March 28 groundbreaking for Unleashed Pets in Waukee.



Glen Marlett, Ken Edwards, Kandace Edwards and Dave Ademeit



Jackie Vrchota, Kerri Harrison and April Hansman



Chris Crone and Mayor Courtney Clarke



Amy Ganoë, Amber Rhoades and Jane Angstman



Tate Hansman and Max Barutta



Carlie and Brooke



Alesia Barutta and Roxanne Harrison



Kelly Troxel and Terry Snyder



# OUT & ABOUT



Madison Taiber, Halsey Scales, Dini Anderlik, Samantha Winebrenner, Jessica Taylor-Fink and Kelly Troxel at the I am Uniquely HER, Johnston, Grimes and Waukee Chamber Women's Event, held April 4 at the Simpson Barn in Johnston.



Izabelle Curl, Hannah McCue and Katie Neer at the I am Uniquely HER, Johnston, Grimes and Waukee Chamber Women's Event, held April 4 at the Simpson Barn in Johnston.



Amy Gano and Amber Rhoades at the I am Uniquely HER, Johnston, Grimes and Waukee Chamber Women's Event, held April 4 at the Simpson Barn in Johnston.



Cecilia Penning and April Hardy at the I am Uniquely HER, Johnston, Grimes and Waukee Chamber Women's Event, held April 4 at the Simpson Barn in Johnston.



Paul Hansen and Donarene Grenell at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care on March 29.



Dr. Jennifer Olson and Gina Runyon at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care on March 29.



Rob Miller and Dustin Mason at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care on March 29.



Hijinio Carreon and Dr. Mustafa Eldadah at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care on March 29.



Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care, 25 W. Hickman Road, Suite 300, on March 29.



Dr. Shilpi Shrivastava, Dr. Collin Foster and Mayor Courtney Clarke at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for MercyOne Waukee Pediatrics Care on March 29.

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