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WELCOME

MORE exercise, fewer excuses

As a younger man, I was an active runner. It was a great stress-reliever and kept my weight where I wanted it to be. I also coached wrestling and worked out directly with many of the young men. And I enjoyed weight lifting. Those activities kept me in decent shape.



Then the kids arrived, along with excuses to not exercise as much. As they grew, it seemed like most of my free time was spent dropping them off and picking them up from their various activities or attending their events. I enjoyed it all, but I did not commit as much time to my own physical exercise, and it now shows. Maybe some of you can relate.

Of course, that was not a great excuse to be inactive, as we all know folks with young kids who run marathons or participate in triathlons. Had I made regular exercise more of a priority, it most certainly would have happened. Maybe not marathons or triathlons, but at least something more than mowing the lawn. The good news is, it's not too late. And as an empty-nester, I can no longer blame it on running the kids.

Admittedly, exercise has changed in each chapter of my life. At 55 years old, I now count walking the dog as exercise. And recreational swimming. And a leisurely bicycle ride. Even a game of disc golf. And why not? That all beats watching another episode of "Yellowstone," doesn't it?

Ideally, Jolene and I would exercise together, but it's not as easy as it sounds. I like to play tennis. She prefers golf. She likes to prep for 20 minutes and go on a bicycle ride. I prefer to plop down on a stationary bike and pedal immediately. We operate at different paces, but that's OK. We do like to go on walks together, and, some day, when I am old enough, I might pick up golf. But probably not.

As most all of us know by now, we are creatures of habit. Good habits and bad habits. Once I break the bad habit of eating Snickers bars and reintroduce the habit of riding that now-dusty exercise bicycle in my basement, I will be started down the right path again.

This month's cover story on active people had me thinking about my exercise, or lack thereof, through the years, and it is even inspiring me to break out that stationary bike again. I might even still catch Beth and Rip on a few "Yellowstone" episodes while I am at it.

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

Gina Chandler
Advertising Account Executive
515-953-4822 x323
gina@iowalivingmagazines.com



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COMPETING for TIME

Residents share how relationships are the “win” in sporting together

By Chantel Boyd

Central Iowa has become a virtual oasis for those looking for sporting opportunities. Baseball, softball, soccer? Fields abound. How about tennis, volleyball, pickleball, basketball? The courts are there. So are the pools, trampolines, rock climbing walls, bowling alleys, skateboarding parks, trails, ice rinks, rivers, lakes, race tracks, and disc golf and golf courses. Want to learn martial arts, fencing, curling, bodybuilding? Go for it. Those wishing to pursue dreams of wins, trophies, accolades, personal bests and other achievements can find the opportunities to do so.

But not everyone is concerned about wins and losses. Some simply want to play sports for the fun of it. They want it to be about time with friends and family — about building relationships. Instead of looking for a chance to shine, they seek a time to share. Instead of medals, they seek memories. Instead of competition, they seek companionship. When the goal is time together, it’s always a win.

Todd Henderson and daughter Ainsley, along with her brother, Aiden, enjoy participating in competitive hockey together.

Miss Mayhem

Christine Svec's daughter, Lola Svec, wears the number 999, and her roller derby name is Miss Mayhem. She is also a student at Urbandale High School.

Lola's family supports her roller derby participation and cheers her on during matches. Her coaches, Traci and Chase Fredergill, a mother-son duo, also cheer her on. The Fredergills are among the coaches with the Des Moines Roller Derby Brats. Traci is the Des Moines Roller Derby B-team coach, and Chase is one of the All-Star coaches. From the Fredergill family of coaches, many athletes have gone on to be ranked at the national level. The head coach of the roller derby team is Mark Muse.

The sport of roller derby has existed for almost 100 years, and Des Moines has one of the best teams in the country. The Derby Brats are currently ranked third in the nation in their division and have previously advanced to nationals in Washington, D.C. Lola was one of the team members who went to France for the World Cup. The team was the 2014 and 2016 Junior Roller Derby Association National

Champions.

Lola has been participating in roller derby since she was 10 years old.

"We are currently ranked No. 3 in the nation, and I have personally grown from a beginner skater to an international gold medalist," she says.

Lola says she enjoys the sport because it is unique.

"It's not your mainstream high school sport like football, volleyball or basketball," Lola says. "It's a unique, one-of-a-kind sport that allows me to meet new friends from all over the country and the world, create a bond with my fellow teammates and a great way for me to get my aggression out."

When Lola explains roller derby to people who know nothing about the sport, she uses a unique description: "I always tell people it's like football on skates but without the ball."

She considered roller derby initially because she liked to roller skate.

"My mom learned about roller derby after I attended a roller-skating birthday party at Skateland," she says, adding that others should try it if they have an interest. "You only live



Lola Svec, also known as Miss Mayhem in the world of roller derby, with team members. The team went to France for the World Cup. It was the 2014 and 2016 Junior Roller Derby Association National Champions.

once, and I know I have already made lifelong friends and have a lifelong love for the sport itself."

Lola's favorite memory is of receiving her gold medal for Team USA Open Division (guys and girls). Lola won at the 2023 Junior Roller Derby World Cup in Valence, France.

"This was an opportunity I am especially proud of as I have worked my way up in roller

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derby competitions since I was 10.”

Lola competed against the best skaters in the country at tryouts in Denver, Philadelphia and Chicago.

“I trained, worked out, and pushed myself physically and mentally as hard as I could for this opportunity. And my hard work paid off. I was selected to be part of Team USA,” she says.

Once selected, the team had just six months to be ready to compete against other countries.

“I attended multiple practices where skaters learned to work with each other on different plays and strategies,” she says.

Team USA took home the gold after playing teams worldwide, including Great Britain, France, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden and Denmark.

Nose work

Emily Muench and her fiancé, Nick Bochner, of Urbandale run Barkology Dog Training, and, in their time off, they do “nose work” as a family with their dog, Oliver.

Nose work, which consists of the dog searching for an odor or treat in different environments, is something that can be done

competitively, but most people do it simply to have fun with their canine family members.

“Everyone is supportive of the other teams (dog and owner) competing, and they want to see each other be successful,” says Emily.

Emily likes having a family-friendly fun athletic activity to do with her dog that entertains them both and keeps them both active.

“I like having an activity for my dog and I to do together that we both enjoy,” she says. “Oliver doesn’t love to be around other dogs either, and nose work is one of the few dog sports that allows him to work without the stress of being close to other dogs.”

Emily wishes more pet owners knew the fun that can be had as a family training furry family members together.

“People don’t understand how great of a bonding activity it can be for the people and their dog,” she says.

Emily and Oliver have also found an extended family by engaging in this activity.

“This bonding activity is also great because you get to be a part of a community of fellow dog lovers,” she says.



Emily Muench and her fiancé, Nick Bochner, run Barkology Dog Training, and, in their time off, they do “nose work” as a family with their dog, Oliver.

If other families with furry members are not sure about starting scent work, Emily suggests experiencing it for yourself as a family.

“Just give it a try. Nose work is great fun for dogs and can help build their confidence, while also fulfilling some natural instincts,” she says, adding that there is a robust community in the metro area that engages in this sport. “The community is full of some incredible people. Midwest K9 is the best for getting started in the sport.”



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FEATURE

Emily's favorite memory is of taking Oliver to his first challenge, where he earned a third place ribbon for one of his searches.

"It was awesome for him to win, but I was just proud of how well he did and how he worked through his challenges."

Rugby brothers

Brothers Hunter and Henry Bagby play rugby at Urbandale High School. Their mom, Karla Rangel, enjoys watching them play.

"Seeing my boys play is one of my biggest proud moments, especially when they are on the same team," she says. "My greatest accomplishment as a mother is how they discipline and encourage each other."

Rugby is a fledgling sport in Iowa, and Karla and the other players' parents are trying to raise awareness about the sport. It's working. Hunter is now planning to continue to play rugby after he graduates.

One recent Friday, the team invited a bunch of neighbors and friends to watch the rugby games at Valley High School. Most community members who filled the stands had never been to a rugby game.

Hunter says he plays rugby because he finds it gripping.

"I like to play rugby because it is such an intense and thrilling sport," he says, adding that it is also a great workout. "The physicality and teamwork make it fun."

Rugby is also a game of strategy, teamwork and skill, Hunter says, adding he wants to put the minds of would-be players, fans and families at ease regarding the game's contact-sport aspect.

"The safety precautions made by referees outweigh the dangers... Although the game's physicality may look bad, it doesn't hurt as badly as you think. It just comes down to the technique," he says. "Rugby combines the fast-paced gameplay from soccer, the physicality of football with the technique and mentality of wrestling."

Hunter is a high school senior who began playing rugby because he had heard about the sport from upper-class students. Henry, his younger brother, became interested in the game when Hunter started playing.

"My brother playing got me interested in the game," Henry says.



Brothers Hunter and Henry Bagby enjoy playing rugby together.

The brothers play on the Urbandale High School team.

Hunter says his favorite part of the sport is that it is built on camaraderie.

"It is a great sport that has brought me together with many other rugby players, and it's straightforward to fall in love with the skills

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you'll pick up from rugby," he says.

"Come try rugby. It's a crazy adrenaline rush and a great way to stay fit. The discipline you get from it helps you in your life, too," Henry says.

"My favorite memories have been when my brother and I dominate the offense and the team comes together and works on strategies to improve and win the game," Hunter says.

On the ice

Sarah Kuhn Henderson often watches her husband, Todd, their son Aiden, 19, and their daughter Ainsley, 16, play ice hockey together. It's a passion for the entire family.

"Ice hockey combines the best parts of other sports into the greatest sport ever created, and we do it on ice. If you like hockey, you have joined a family of like-minded sports fans you can relate to and talk hockey forever," Todd says.

Like many sports, ice hockey's goal is to score more goals than the opposing team. But it is a game of strategy and strength.

"Hockey is so fast-paced that substitutions

are made without a stoppage of play," Todd says.

Todd was a long-time hockey fan before he ever participated in the sport. When a local ice rink opened, he decided to give it a try.

"Hockey has always been amazing to watch on television, especially live, but it is a game of opportunity. If you don't have a local ice rink, you don't have the opportunity to play," he says. "I started playing when I was 30 when some friends invited me to go with them to try it at the rink they had just put in. They loaned me skates and gear, and I was hooked on day one."

Todd and Sarah's oldest child, Aiden, started skating at a young age with Todd's help.

"Our son started in a parent-and-me skating class at age 4 and then learned to play in third grade," Todd says.

Aiden's first year of organized team play was in fifth grade. Now he will play for Drake University Club Hockey next year, where his dad, Todd, is the head coach.

Todd and Sarah's daughter, Ainsley, started skating in fourth grade. She has played in a women's novice hockey league and the Des

Moines High School Hockey League.

The Henderson family plays right in Urbandale.

"We are fortunate to have the Metro Ice Sports facility where we play two hours every Sunday night in the Mid-Iowa Beginners League (MIB), where I help coach and referee," says Todd.

The three play in local tournaments for Stanhope State University, "a mythical school for which our hockey team is named after," Todd says.

Todd encourages others to try hockey.

"Hockey is a sport you can play your whole life. In the MIB, we have people try hockey for the first time as young adults aged up to their 60s. It's a great group, and they all support each other."

Todd says he often gets asked how cool it is to play with his kids.

"My answer is always the same. You won't truly understand until you experience it with your kids." ■

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GOING for it

Originally hailing from Urbandale, Run Wilson hopes to make waves in the music industry.



It was the summer of 2019. Local guitarist Max Yoder was asked to put a band together to perform at a music festival his church was putting together.

Why not, Yoder thought, so he contacted Luke Lilienthal first, for no other reason than he stood next to Yoder in their school choir at Urbandale High.

“We had ‘jammed before’ because we were really the only ones that played guitar when we were younger but never actually started a band,” Yoder says.

Next up was Logan Ingraham.

“We knew that Logan played keys, so we cornered him in the lunchroom the next day and asked if he would play keys,” Yoder says.

Yoder’s friend Bella, who went to school in Ankeny, had friends Eli (Wilson) and Israel who played bass and drums respectively.

And Urban Crowns was born. The church show was rained out, unfortunately, but the fivesome continued, setting up a backyard show at Ingraham’s house in Urbandale for all of their friends and family. Five months later, they were recording their first EP under the name Run Wilson. Reed Andrews was the new drummer, and things were beginning to take shape. Five years, a full album, some singles and another EP

later, the band is still going strong. They even have some road miles under their collective belts.

A 2021 national tour was completely booked independently, and the band was on the road for four weeks in a run-down van with a run-down trailer, circling the Midwest before making the trek northeast to New York City and Boston and then south to Atlanta before heading home. And just because it’s Iowa doesn’t mean the excitement was any less. In Ames, the band played a college party where people climbed onto roofs in order to catch a better view. Another time the band played a show in swim trunks at a pool party and took a dive into the water during a break between sets.

“Every show is memorable for its own reasons, whether good or bad,” Yoder says. “We usually try to focus on the good though.”

The band recently played their 60th show at xBk Live in Des Moines on May 11.

“It’s an incredible feeling to be able to take the stage with so much support,” Yoder says. “Nothing will ever compare to when the lights are flashing, the drums are booming behind you, and you’re looking out on a crowd of dancing and jumping bodies enjoying the energy of your music.”

One of Run Wilson’s biggest fans is none

other than Urbandale High School Principal Tim Carver.

“Mr. Carver is like family to us, an honorary member of Run Wilson for sure,” Yoder says. “Everyone besides Eli graduated from Urbandale, and we all graduated with Katie, Tim’s daughter. Tim was always very involved in sporting events and choir, but we never expected him to support us so much outside of school. He would play our music through the hallways (rumor has it he still does) and wear our merch on casual Fridays. A Run Wilson show just isn’t the same without Tim, and he always makes sure to shoot us a text when he can’t make it. He never fails to let us know how proud he is that we’re doing so well, and he really is just a genuine fan of our music.”

Ideally, Yoder says, Nashville would be the band’s hub, where they could look for a record deal or get support for more touring. Until then? Forward they go.

“We’re in the writing/demo stages of another album, so there aren’t any signs of stopping anytime soon,” he says. “For me, music is my everything. There isn’t a plan B. That’s why I moved to Nashville to study songwriting at Belmont University. Eventually, we’d like to be playing Hinterland and 80/35. We have high hopes for where the journey will take us next.” ■

NAVIGATING Social Security election: How to unlock your best option

Knowing when to elect Social Security can feel overwhelming. With the possibility of 81 election options for couples, the choice is anything but straightforward. It is more than just deciding between taking benefits at 62 (when you can first elect), at full retirement age (66 or 67 for most people), or at 70 (the age at which your benefit stops growing). For many retirees, Social Security represents 25% to 35% of their retirement income. You want to make the most of this vital retirement income source.



A lot of times when pre-retirees first meet with one of our Retirement Planners, they are working with a financial advisor. We often hear the following about their Social Security decision, “My advisor said, make your election and then let me know what you decide.” This

advice makes me cringe. Social Security benefits over 25 years can add up to \$500,000 for an individual and \$1 million for a couple. This decision deserves a complex analysis, not a “good luck, you’re on your own” approach.

That complex analysis should include all your different retirement savings accounts (including any pensions), your monthly income needs in retirement, your long-term tax plan, and your plans to leave a legacy to loved ones or charities. Your health, longevity, and marital status should also be considered. Once you have a clear picture of these factors and how they work with your Social Security, you don’t have to rely on luck. You have powerful information that will help you make the most of your benefit.

For married couples, we often recommend a combination strategy. One spouse will take their benefit early, typically the one with the lower benefit, and the other spouse will defer their benefit — maybe until full retirement age, just

before or up to age 70. This strategy allows the couple to get some Social Security income right away in retirement and defer some for a higher income down the road and a higher survivorship benefit for the spouse who lives the longest.

That’s just one strategy. There are many more. I have learned that small shifts can cascade into big outcomes in retirement planning, especially when it comes to electing Social Security. Instead of “let me know what you decide,” your Social Security needs more time and attention, and so does your retirement. You spend a lot of time saving for retirement — spending some time planning is one of those shifts that can lead to big outcomes in retirement. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.



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A FLEETING life

Even after officiating a number of funerals, I'm still surprised by how quickly life passes and how easily we are forgotten. The Psalmist grappled with these sobering realities in Psalm 39:4: "Lord, make me know my life's end, and what the number of my days is, so that I may know how frail I am."

Life's brevity and our fleeting memory prompted the Psalmist and us to focus on two life investments.



Our first priority is a **life that continues**. The Psalmist faced life's brevity with hope for the future by turning to the Lord. "My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions" (Psalm 39:7-8). Our transgressions separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2) and deserve His condemnation of eternal death (Romans 6:23). God provided our only rescue. We can escape certain eternal death and enter eternal life only through faith in Christ's sacrifice as the full payment for our rebellion (Romans 5:8). "He who believes in the Son has eternal life...and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death and into life" (John 3:36; 5:24). Eternal life begins the moment we trust Christ for our salvation.

A life that continues makes possible a **life that counts**. The Psalmist observed the futility of pursuing what's fleeting: "Surely every man... makes an uproar for nothing; He amasses riches and does not know who will gather them" (Psalm 39:6). In contrast to a life where efforts evaporate is a life where efforts are eternal. Jesus admonished, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy...But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven..." (Matthew 6:19-20). A life that counts prioritizes what matters to God. "But seek first His (God's) kingdom and His righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33). Paul shared some of God's priorities when he commanded that we should "pursue righteousness, godliness, love, faith, perseverance, and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11). He revealed the necessary perspective behind those practices when he wrote "... with all boldness Christ shall now, even as always be exalted in my body whether by life or death" (Philippians 1:20).

We exalt Christ by declaring His promise to others that "he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies" (John 11:25). We exalt Christ by demonstrating His priority of serving others selflessly and sacrificially (Mark 10:45). Missionary C.T. Studd aptly stated, "Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

Are you investing only in what is fleeting or in what is forever? Remember, "All that is not eternal is eternally obsolete" (Jim Elliot). ■

Information provided by Steve Smith, Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-279-3919.

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We think about our financial capabilities as an important measure of independence, similar to our ability to drive or live alone. The thought of losing the ability to manage your finances is terrifying. Planning ahead will help you stay in control of your finances.

“Diminished financial capacity” is the decline in a person’s ability to manage money. When people of any age lose the capability to manage their finances, they may also become more vulnerable to fraud and other forms of financial abuse.

Taking the steps listed below will help avoid or minimize problems for you and your family:

First, organize and store important documents in a secure, easily accessible location. That way, they are readily available in an emergency. Give copies to trusted family members or let them know where to find the documents.

Second, make sure you have a valid financial power of attorney. A financial power of attorney gives someone the legal authority to make financial decisions for you if you cannot. The document is “durable” because it remains in effect even if you become incapacitated. You retain



the ability to change it or cancel it as long as you are still able to make decisions.

After signing a durable financial power of attorney, you can still manage your money as long as you have the ability to make decisions. Also, you always have the option to change who you want to act as your appointed representative and the individuals you allow to access your financial information.

Third, keep things up to date. Be sure that, if something changes, you keep your information as current as possible. Your trusted contacts may change over time. Keep your attorney and investment advisor informed of changes regarding who has authority to review your account or whom they should contact in case of an emergency.

Finally, speak up if something goes wrong. If you ever think someone is taking advantage of you, or that you’ve been the victim of a fraud, tell someone. The sooner you let someone know about it, the better chance there is of putting an end to it.

An experienced estate-planning attorney can help you put a power of attorney into place to plan for future incapacity and to safeguard your money. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com.

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LEADERSHIP Urbandale returns to empower participants

The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce announced the return of Leadership Urbandale, offering a transformative experience designed to empower leaders at all levels. The program is designed for both seasoned executives seeking to refine their skills or aspiring leaders looking to immerse themselves in the community. The Chamber's comprehensive program promises invaluable insights and practical strategies to propel attendees toward success. Applications are accepted through June 15, with notification of acceptance for up to 20 taking place on July 15.

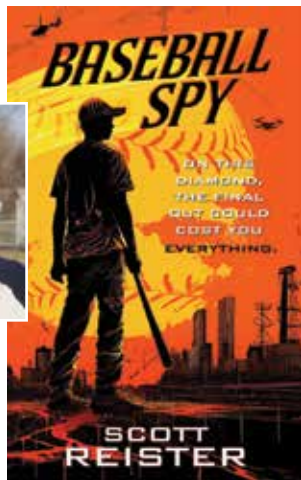
"Knowledge is key. Anytime you can educate businesses and leaders of the community in which they work or live, you are enhancing the community experience," said Leadership Urbandale committee member Erica Boliver of Delta Dental. "Not only will participants be able to learn more about the city and local government, but they will also be exposed to a variety of leadership opportunities along the way."

Spanning from September to June, Leadership Urbandale is a dynamic journey filled with workshops, interactive discussions, and hands-on experiences tailored to cultivate the confidence, vision and influence necessary to inspire teams, drive innovation and navigate complex challenges with finesse.

Visit the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce website, www.uniquelyurbandale.com, for more information. ■

REISTER announces release of first novel

Scott Reister of Urbandale announces the April 23 release of his first novel, "Baseball Spy," published by Young Dragons Press. Reister, a broadcaster, has three children in the Urbandale schools and has coached soccer for several years.



"Baseball Spy," a fictional novel, is about a 14-year-old baseball player trying to save the country and his family by figuring out who on his team is an evil spy.

"I have dreamt of this moment for years," says Reister. "It took me years to get a literary agent and, finally, a book deal, but it's finally here. I wanted this to be traditionally published, and, with a ton of help, we got it done."

Reister is planning launch events around the area, including May 11 at Barnes and Noble and one this June at the Urbandale Library. The book is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. He is working on the next book in the series, "Football Spy." ■

THANK YOU, Mom and Dad

Our mother died a few years ago after struggling through the late stages of Alzheimer's disease. Honoring her during this stressful time was our family's ultimate goal. And then, again, when she died, we wanted to honor her life in the best way we could. Well, we can tell you firsthand that having her preplanned funeral in place was extremely valuable in helping us achieve our goal. All of the information surrounding her death, visitation, service and burial were organized in a preplanning file at the funeral home. Knowing her wishes, having merchandise selections already made, having the details about what would be in her obituary already written down, and having the information for the death certificate already recorded all helped to make the process of funeral arrangements so much easier for our family.

Since that time, our dad has been "tweaking" his own preplan, which is currently in place at the funeral home, and, for that, we are so thankful. When that time comes, and our heads are spinning with grief, we won't have to wonder or guess. We will know exactly how best to honor him.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for this gift. With love, from your two daughters. ■

Information provided by Sasha Mudlaff and Holly Peterson Miller, family owners, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-243-5221.



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6 Area Locations

RECIPE

A CREAMY pasta delight perfect for dining outdoors

(Family Features) Warming weather brings with it plenty of opportunities to celebrate from holidays and birthdays to sunny afternoons offering an excuse to spend time outdoors with loved ones. Dining al fresco brings added freshness to favorite foods, and taking your next meal to the patio can be a fun, delicious way to soak in some vitamin D.

Pasta provides an easy option for sharing with a crowd, like this Creamy Tomato Smoked Sausage and Asparagus Tortellini. A cheesy, filling delight, it's ready to enjoy in less than half an hour.

Plus, locally grown Michigan Asparagus adds an extra level of freshness requiring just about three days to travel from family farms in Michigan to your kitchen. It doesn't need a passport to make it from farm to table, and you won't need one either to enjoy this Italian-inspired dish in the comfort of home.

Find more patio-friendly recipe ideas at michiganasparagus.org. ■

Creamy tomato smoked sausage and asparagus tortellini

Recipe courtesy of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board
Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound smoked turkey sausage, sliced into bite-sized rounds
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 2/3 cups chicken broth
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 18 ounces cheese tortellini
- 1/2 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces



- In large rimmed skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- Add sausage and brown on both sides. Add garlic and stir until golden, 20-30 seconds.
- Add broth, tomato sauce, cream and tortellini; stir to combine. Bring to light simmer.
- Cover and simmer over low heat 10 minutes. Add asparagus during last 5 minutes of cooking until tortellini is tender and sauce has reduced.

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GIRLS GROUP launched at Valerius Elementary

Building self-esteem and empowering girls to develop healthy relationships

This school year was the first time Valerius Elementary School has partnered with the Chrysalis Foundation to bring Girls Group to its fourth- and fifth-grade students.

Courtney Davenport and Emily Battani facilitated the Girls Group while at Karen Acres Elementary School, and, when the two schools combined last fall, they decided to bring the program with them.

“A lot of girls in fourth and fifth grade start to develop lower self-esteem, care more about others’ opinions, and have a hard time creating and maintaining positive relationships. Girls Group is able to teach these skills in a way that empowers girls to develop healthy relationships and prepare them for middle school,” Battani says.

Because the number of participants doubled, the group was divided into two sections to better serve all the girls interested in participating. A total of 54 students are involved in Girls Group.

“I like best that we get to do a lot of learning about emotions and then get to do fun activities about it. I also liked learning about good versus toxic relationships, which I think will be beneficial for me for the future,” Girls Group member Anna says.

“I liked getting to know new girls and having a place with people I can relate to,” member Addison adds.

Girls Group is unique in that it facilitates social skills, STEAM, career and college readiness, and healthy relationship lessons alongside a snack and a craft. Another unique aspect of the club is GirlPower mentors. GirlPower mentors involved three high school girls from surrounding districts that mentored students and taught various topics.

“I love creating a space where girls this age can find community and have conversations about self-esteem, friendships, STEAM, hygiene, etc. in a safe space with other girls their age. They are able to gain new perspectives and form friendships with others they might not have outside of the group,” Battani says.

Next school year, Girls Group is looking forward to adding new members and maintaining its attendance numbers. Members of the club will also visit Skateland this May. The field trip provides an opportunity for the girls to meet outside of school while practicing learned skills and engaging in physical activity.

“I strongly believe that the most important thing for girls to have when they leave Chrysalis After-School is confidence. Confidence in everything they do and confidence that they can carry with them for the rest of their lives,” Davenport says. ■



Members of Girls Group gather for conversation, snack, craft and more.

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HOSPICE care may be a gift to your family

For Marie's family, summer had always been special, with relatives coming from near and far to spend time with one another. Last year was bittersweet, though, as Marie's chronic health conditions were causing her to decline. And though she still looked forward to seeing beloved family members, she and her husband, Skip, were wondering how they would take part in the usual reunion festivities.

As it happened, assistance from an in-home hospice provider placed a little more focus on the "sweet" and allowed the couple and their family members to make treasured memories.

"Hospice started caring for my wife just after Easter," Skip says. "They enabled her to have some really good months, and she felt well enough to celebrate with our extended family when they came in June. It seems strange to say, but she lived really well during that final summer."



If you're considering hospice services for a family member, it may seem counterintuitive to think about "living" in conjunction with services offered at the end of life. But even during hospice care, a person is living — and it's important to understand that hospice services can actually help ensure quality of life.

Options for hospice services are nearly as varied as the individuals who seek them. They range from home care to services in a freestanding hospice center to in-between, hybrid models, and the type of care you and your loved one select is truly an individual choice.

But no matter the type of services you're considering, you should always ask any provider on your list: "How can you help me or my loved one continue to LIVE through this stage of life?"

Ideally, hospice services should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice services, enabling a patient to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months or longer that remain in his or her life.

So, if you are dealing with a family member's illness as you prepare for summer, give some thought to the ways you and your family want to spend time together. For some families, it's comforting to have hospice providers care for the person in their home so loved ones can gather in a familiar setting.

Making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult — but having care in place can actually help make special occasions more relaxed and meaningful for your loved one as well as the whole family.

"Once we met with hospice and set up a plan, we breathed a sigh of relief knowing my wife would be comfortable at home, and we could focus on making our summer gathering as special as possible with her favorite traditions," Skip says. "Looking back, we are so grateful for those memories." ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which offers health and well-being services through communities and an array of at-home services. To learn more, please visit wesleylife.org/at-home-services or call 515-978-2777.

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Johnston, IA

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SUMMER FUN IN JOHNSTON 2024

THE YARD
JOHNSTON TOWN CENTER

LIBRARY

By Staci Stanton,
Programming & Outreach Manager

URBANDALE Public Library news

DIY Studio: Did you know the library has a DIY Studio with equipment and software to help you create your own digital projects? The DIY Studio has several equipment options, including scanners and photo editing software, as well as a VHS to DVD converter, camera equipment and much more. Reservations are recommended, and the room can be used for up to four hours per day. Visit our website for a complete list of equipment and guidelines for using the studio.



Summer Reading Kickoff: We are excited for the start of the 2024 summer program, "Read, Renew, Repeat." Join us on Thursday, May 30 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. for our Summer Reading Kickoff, which will include a bubble station, crafts and the return of the foam blaster from Absolute Science. In addition to weekly activities like Hands-On Play and Creativity Quest, we'll have special appearances by a variety of performers. Visit our website for more details and a full calendar of events.

100 Things to Do in Des Moines: Join Erin Huiatt, local author of the book "100 Things to Do in Des Moines Before You Die," for a special BINGO-style program highlighting the metro's top attractions and hidden gems. This program is perfect for families planning their adventures around Des Moines or anyone wanting to learn about all Des Moines (and Iowa) has to offer. Make plans to attend on Tuesday, June 4 at 6 p.m.

Behind the Beat: To celebrate Juneteenth, the library will host an exhibit from the African American Museum of Iowa in June. "Behind the Beat" features the diverse musical styles throughout African American history and the American experience. More about the exhibit: "In music, we can hear and feel history through lyrics, melodies, harmonies and rhythms. For more than 400 years, African Americans have pioneered diverse musical styles that influenced, and were influenced by, historical events and cultural trends. Listen carefully and you'll hear the agony of slavery, the frustration of post-Civil War reconstruction, the urban pulse of the Great Migration, the determination of the Civil Rights Movement, and the realities of contemporary life."

Public Piano: The Urbandale Public Library is excited to host a City Sounds DSM piano available to the public (weather-permitting) during library hours until mid-October. The piano has been made possible by support from the UPL Foundation in conjunction with The City of Urbandale's Public Art committee. ■



MOVIES IN THE YARD
MAY 16 - JUNE 21 - AUG. 15 - SEPT. 19
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SATURDAY, JUNE 1
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4:00 PM TO 7:00 PM



SOUNDS OF SUMMER
JUNE 8 - JUNE 29 - AUG. 24 - SEPT. 28
7:00 PM TO 10:00 PM



TUNES AT TWILIGHT
JULY 18 - AUG. 8 - SEPT. 12
7:30 PM TO 9:00 PM



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CHRISTENSEN, New promoted

The Stelter Company announces the promotions of two employees and their appointment to the executive leadership team — recognizing their outstanding contributions and commitment to the company.

Zach Christensen has been promoted to vice president of strategy, innovation and marketing. Now in his 20th year at Stelter, Christensen has held several pivotal positions. In his most recent role as creative director/marketing director, he expanded Stelter’s visibility in the planned giving industry and strengthened its brand reputation as the premier marketing partner for asset-based giving. In his new role, Christensen will lead the development of successful marketing and business strategies and drive organizational change by forging new working relationships and synergies across the company. Additionally, Christensen will guide Stelter’s data and analytics team to cultivate data-driven insights, ensuring continued innovation within the evolving landscape.



Zach Christensen

Nina New has been promoted to vice president of operations. Also in her 20th year, New previously held the position of director of operations where she successfully led key strategic projects that laid the groundwork for Stelter’s continued growth. In 2023, she and her team completed more than 100 company projects that improved processes, increased efficiency, and ultimately increased profits and employee engagement. In her new role, New will provide visibility and alignment around strategic and departmental goals, spearhead operational strategy, and lead cross-functional teams in the areas of sales operations, IT/data security, and project management.



Nina New

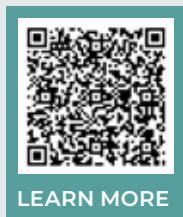
Christensen and New join five other Stelter executives on the leadership team. The group consists of committed professionals with decades of expertise in business, marketing, operational strategy, financial management and employee development. Christensen and New will join the others to develop strategic plans and guide the direction of Stelter. ■



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations



Food Drive

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
American Legion, 6805 Douglas Ave.,
Urbandale

Donations of food and personal items, as well as monetary donations, can be dropped off curbside. Make checks payable to Urbandale Food Pantry. The greatest needs are for cash and personal hygiene products. Food items most needed are meals in a can, canned fruit, peanut butter, tuna and canned meats, cereals, canned vegetable and pasta sauce. Personal hygiene items most needed are toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent, body wash, toothpaste, deodorant, diapers and wipes. The event is sponsored by VFW Post 9668 Urbandale/Johnston, Boy Scout Troops 43 and 98, Urbandale American Legion 663 and Urbandale Food Pantry.



Mayor's Bike Ride

Saturday, May 18, 9 a.m. start
with coffee and donuts at 8 a.m.

Meet at the large shelter at Walnut Creek Regional Park for the Mayor's Bike Ride. Following coffee and donuts, the ride starts at 9 a.m. This is a free event brought to you by the City of Urbandale. Although not required, pre-registration is appreciated so organizers know how many people to expect: https://urbandale.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs?leaguesid=4787

Urbandale Historical Society reception

June 9, 2-4 p.m.
Olmsted-Urban House,
4010 70th St.

The public is invited to a special reception honoring Virginia Gee and Bob Simon. They have been the heart and soul of the Urbandale Historical Society for many years. They will be celebrated and honored for all they have done for the community over the years.

Ice Cream Social

June 30, 2-4 p.m.
Olmsted-Urban
House, 4010 70th St.

The public is invited to enjoy an ice cream social to begin the Fourth of July week's celebrations.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Check for cancellations

History programs at the Library

Sunday, May 19, 2 p.m.
Urbandale Public Library,
3520 86th St.

The Urbandale Historical Society and the Urbandale Public Library are working together to present monthly history programs. On May 19, the History of the Urbandale Library will be presented by Staci Stanton.

The Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St., Urbandale, is open the first Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m. for tours.



Ice Cream Social

Friday, May 24, 1-2 p.m.
Urbandale Senior
Recreation Center, 7305
Aurora Ave.

Stop by for ice cream with all the best sundae toppings and time to socialize with friends. No registration required.

Polk County Conservation events

Visit www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/events/ for information about upcoming programs offered by Polk County Conservation and for registration links.

Pony Tales, Thursday, June 20, 11 a.m.; Friday, July 12, 11 a.m.; Thursday, Aug. 15, 11 a.m. at Jester Park Equestrian Center. Enjoy listening to a pony-themed story while the ponies of the Equestrian Center are listening nearby. A pony meet and greet will follow. We will meet at the outdoor picnic shelter or the arena concourse depending on the weather. Bring a blanket or camp chair to spread out on the lawn. This event is free.

Native Plant Sale, Saturday, May 18, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Saturday, June 15, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Jester Park Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center. Polk County Conservation and Prairie Landscape of Iowa are teaming up to offer two native plant sales. All plant species for sale are native to Iowa, and, once established, require minimal care while providing numerous benefits to our local wildlife and landscapes.

Story Tellebration, Wednesday, May 22, 10 a.m., "Born To Be Wild"; Wednesday, June 26, 10 a.m., "Down at the Pond"; Wednesday, July 24, 10 a.m., "Color, Color Everywhere"; Wednesday, Aug. 28, 10 a.m. "I Love Bugs." Join volunteer storyteller Carmen Epstein for a fun, interactive tale tailored toward children ages 2 to 6 that explores the wonders of the outdoors. During each program, participants enjoy interactive stories and an activity. No registration required for this free event. ■

Urbandale 2024 Summer Concert Series



- Tuesday, June 11, 6:30-8 p.m., enjoy Brad & Kate at Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park near the library.
- Tuesday, July 9, 6:30-8 p.m., enjoy June Bugs at Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park near the library.
- Tuesday, Aug. 13, 6:30-8 p.m., enjoy Opus Taylor at Lions Park.



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EMPLOYEES give back to community

Company's VTO program promotes volunteerism.

April was National Volunteer Month, and April 20 was Volunteer Recognition Day. For The Stelter Company, an integrated marketing agency in Urbandale that partners with nonprofit clients throughout the country, volunteerism is integral to its business and company culture. While staff spend most of their work hours promoting the missions of their nonprofit clients through strategic marketing campaigns, employees have the opportunity to spend some of that time doing the good work of nonprofits themselves through Stelter's Volunteer Time Off (VTO) program. Staff can use up to eight hours of paid time off each year to volunteer in their communities.

"Giving back is really woven into the fabric of everything we do at Stelter. It's part of our DNA as a company," says Nathan Stelter, president. "In fact, it's one of our core values: 'We believe individual generosity can transform communities and the world. We embrace the

power of doing good, in our 9-to-5s and our daily lives.' Our VTO program reflects that value."

In 2023, Stelter employees spent 456 hours volunteering, helping more than 25 nonprofits. Seventy-two percent of staff participated in the program.

Estela Villanueva-Whitman, Stelter resource manager and co-chair of Stelter's DEI Community Impact Team, says making volunteering easy is the key to participation.

"We compile a directory of diverse volunteer options each year that staff can access on our intranet. Employees are encouraged to share their VTO experiences with photos and descriptions on the site so that colleagues can see what's being done, which helps inspire others to join in."

Stelter also sets aside time for specific activities that staff can participate in without using their VTO time. One example is the

Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity Women Build. Seventeen employees joined construction crews in 2023, helping build two houses and raising \$2,322 for their team, Stelter for Shelter. The company also devotes a half-day to community service at its annual all-company meetings in June. Villanueva-Whitman organizes a handful of opportunities that serve a cross-section of interests, needs and populations for staff to choose from. During the 2023 meeting, staff volunteered at ChildServe, Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC), The Des Moines Community Playhouse, Des Moines Parks and Recreation and Des Moines Refugee Support.

Learn more about the nonprofits Stelter serves in the blog "Doing Good Through VTO." Stelter is always on the lookout for volunteer opportunities. If you are a nonprofit in Des Moines or the surrounding area that needs help, email stella@stelter.com. ■

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URBANDALE COUNCIL RECAP



Mayor Robert Andeweg and Director of Parks & Recreation Jan Herke with the family of Rick Boals. Mr. Boals served as Urbandale's Parks and Recreation Director from 1974 - 2005.

Monday, May 6: Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Monday, May 6, and began with three proclamations recognizing Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month; Police Week; and Building Safety Month.

The Council also approved signing a letter of support requesting an increase in the membership of the Dallas County Board of Supervisors. Currently, the Dallas County Board of Supervisors consists of three

elected members. Increasing the membership of the Dallas County Board of Supervisors to five would provide better representation for all Dallas County residents. Dallas County is the fastest growing county in the State of Iowa and one of the fastest growing in the United States.

The City took a significant step towards sustainability with the completion of the installation of 450 solar panels on top of the Parks & Public Works Maintenance Facility. The Council accepted the new photovoltaic array as constructed and authorized final payment to the contractor. The total cost of the project was about \$500,000.

The City Council approved renaming South Karen Acres Park to Rick Boals Park in acknowledgment of his service and dedication to Urbandale. Mr. Boals served as Urbandale's Director of Parks and Recreation from 1974 to 2005 and recently passed away in January 2024. Rick's key contributions during his tenure included the development of more than 40 parks, 33 miles of trails, 790 acres of parkland, and recreation facilities throughout the city.

The City Council approved purchasing four acres of blighted land at the southwest corner of 100th Street and Douglas Avenue for \$2,500,000. The property remains in a deteriorated condition due to poor grading and upkeep. Ultimately, this purchase will allow the City to guide future development in this area, given its prominent location along the Douglas Avenue corridor.

The City Council will meet again on Tuesday, May 14.

Newsletter Sign-Up



You get plenty of e-mail already, that's why the City's official e-newsletter is delivered only once per month. It's your place to get a quick, streamlined, monthly update about all things Urbandale. www.urbandale.org/news

Council Recap is Online



Looking for a particular meeting recap? We have all the recaps online! www.urbandale.org/councilrecap

This is a custom publication from the City of Urbandale. The Council Recap is not the official minutes of the Council meeting, it's an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand digest of the Council Meetings specifically designed for residents. You can watch all the City Council meetings on YouTube and download Council agendas on the City's website.

Urbandale City Hall | 3600 86th Street, Urbandale, IA 50322 | 515-278-3900 | www.urbandale.org

AM Exchange

Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange was hosted at Tripplett Office Solutions on April 30.



Cliff Conklin, Jason Fredregill, Jack Fries and David Russell



Keith Riden, Kyle Lee and Melisha Pals



Craig Johansen and Karen Hall



Emily Kohl and Aaron Burns



Caleb Gilbertson and Nate Buch



Jeremy Kane and Lee Snell



Kyle Younker and Fletcher Barry



Jeff Rogers and Dennis Archer



Giovanni Bahena and Sam Meyer



Eddie III and Nathan Kneifl



Joe Meyers and Misty Trogdon

OUT & ABOUT



Carrie Blackbird and Rachel Reavis at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Nicki White, Kim Stewart and Alexa Lloyd at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Nicole Berger and Sandee Cook at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Jay Mathes and Zach Bouslog at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Kahla Wier and Madeline Ward at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Connor Shipley and Randy Pelham at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Ashlen Sheaffer and Karen Denger at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce AM Exchange hosted at Tripllett Office Solutions on April 30.



Amanda Sudduth and Becky Iddings at the New Horizon Academy ribbon cutting for its grand opening on April 25.



Melisha Pals and Stephanie Gibson at the New Horizon Academy ribbon cutting for its grand opening on April 25.



Kelena Bonnell, Whitney Popkes and Heidi Oppegard at the New Horizon Academy ribbon cutting for its grand opening on April 25.

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⁹Horsepower and torque ratings based on premium fuel per SAE J1349¹¹ standard. Horsepower, torque, and fuel economy are independent attributes and may not be achieved simultaneously.

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