

# Living

MAGAZINE



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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

**Angela Ossian**  
Advertising Account Executive  
515-953-4822 x307  
angela@iowalivingmagazines.com



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# Steve Van Oort

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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.

Jory Houser enjoys playing disc golf with his family and likes that even his son, Kai, can participate. The two enjoy practicing “putting” in their yard.

## Gymnastics and disc golf bring Houser family together

Christian “Jory” Houser from Altoona is active with his son, Kai, in family-fun outdoor activities. His wife, Linley, joins in at times, too.

The Houser family likes running, basketball, football, soccer, gymnastics, ultimate Frisbee and disc golf.

“We don’t all do all those sports, but between us all, we participate in those,” Jory says.

Jory admits that two are more out of the ordinary. The first nontraditional sport is gymnastics. The Houser yard is set up for Kai to train in gymnastics, and he trains with other athletes at a gym.

“Our son trains at Triad in Ankeny and practices in the yard,” Jory says.

The other nontraditional sport the Houser family enjoys together is disc golf.

“I play weekly and enter tournaments, and my son, Kai, is starting to get into it more and more. My wife, Linley, and I are now going to more courses with him, too,” Jory says.

Both Jory and Linley were involved in activities.

“My wife danced, and I played sports, and we saw the importance sports can bring for our son, Kai,” Jory says.

Kai fell in love with Ninja Kids, a performance-based activity where participants try to perform tricks to the specifications similar to gymnastics at a young age.

“His uncle and aunt bought us the gymnastics course for our backyard when he was very young, so he has grown up with it and spends much of his time on it learning new tricks,” Jory says. “We have had the trampoline for around the same amount of time.”

Jory enjoys disc golf because it’s accessible.

“Almost anyone can play it, from my son, who is 7, to our grandparents,” he says.

Jory grew up in the country and enjoys the outdoors, so disc golf is a way for him and his family to appreciate nature.

“The courses are built to accent the woods and areas they are in,” he says. “It’s fun to find new courses as we travel, too.”

With disc golf, the gist of the game is to throw a minimal number of times and land the disc in the basket.

“Similar to golf, each hole has a par to get to, and your goal is to get it in that amount or lower,” Jory says. “You typically play 18 holes, and the lowest score wins.”

Disc golf is easy to start, but mastering it can be a different story. Like gymnastics, the maneuvers take time to learn.



John, Tori, Tucker and Elijah Hanson enjoy curling as a family and meeting other enthusiasts of the sport.

There are many metro area leagues and organizations that assist disc golfers, as well as gymnasts.

Jory has been playing disc golf since 2005 but became seriously interested in the sport around 2018.

“I only recently started playing tournaments in the area,” Jory says. “I started playing because it was a good transition from ultimate Frisbee into a different sport.”

Like many, Jory and his family played sports during COVID-19 because it was something he could do outside with family and friends.

“I liked that my son could play with me,” he says.

Jory and his son even have a practice basket at their house.

“Kai and I practice putting together,” he says.

Kai has his bag and discs, and Jory says he is in charge of keeping his own clean and in order.

Jory looks forward to attending tournaments with Kai down the road, and he will be cheering him on, as he often does for gymnastics.

Jory has played many sports and thinks disc golf has some of the best camaraderie in the Altoona area.

“I think this is one of the nicest communities I have been a part of,” he says. “Everyone wants to share this game with others and wants to help teach it.”

Jory’s favorite memories of disc golfing are when he and his friends hit hole-in-ones. His other favorite experience is watching pro disc

golfers come to Iowa.

The Des Moines Challenge is hosted in Indianola annually. This year, it will be July 5-7.

“It is such a fun experience to see the professionals, and taking your kids and families to it is nice,” Jory says.

## Curling is a family affair for the Hansons

Tori Hanson, her husband, John, and their two kids, Tucker and Elijah, participate in curling.

“It’s an Olympic winter sport originally designed in Scotland,” Tori says. “We have met the best people playing this sport. There is a community feel by design. Before and after, at dedicated curling facilities, members show up to talk and support each other.”

Since it is a smaller community of players, the Hansons have gotten to know others through their mutual interest in the sport.

“On the ice, there is a code of conduct even among the most competitive teams. Players, not officials, handle most disputes,” Tori says.

Des Moines does not have dedicated curling facilities.

“We do our best to meet when and where we can to develop that community feel,” she says.

Tori explains that curling is the most difficult of accessible, no-contact sports.

“There is a lot of strategy and precision playing,” she says. “The goal is to throw a 42-pound stone down 150 feet of ice and hit

closest to the center circle of a group of circles called a house. Easy, right? Not hardly, especially when playing on hockey/figure skating ice.”

Tori’s husband, John, has watched curling during the Olympics for years, and Tucker and Elijah watched as well.

“We picked up a chance to try to learn to curl for my youngest’s 21st birthday. We fell in love with the sport and the people,” Tori says.

Now, the Hansons play curling as a family team.

“Elijah is our ‘skips’ (captain of a curling team) and gets to boss us around,” Tori says.

The Hansons mostly play at the MidAmerican Energy RecPlex in West Des Moines.

“They have been wonderful and have tried to give us what they can for ice time, but ice is a hot commodity in the Des Moines area,” Tori says.

The curlers play on Sunday nights, offering two leagues of two hours apiece.

According to Tori and her family, curling is a great sport for anyone.

“There are adaptations for all ages and levels,” Tori says.

The Des Moines Curling Club provides

seemingly everything a new curler needs to begin playing.

“We showed up in sweats and tennis shoes, and they provided the rest,” she says.

Tori’s favorite memory was winning the B bracket at a bonspiel (curling tournament) in Kansas City against a team from Las Vegas.

“There were folks there from across the country,” she says. “It’s a weekend of games, grub, gabbing and, of course, curling.”

Another fun memory Tori had was building a mini curling rink in their backyard.

“We would be outdoors for hours as a family in the winter,” she says. “Who does that?”

Tori and the rest of the Hansons collect pins from the teams they play.

“It’s a thing folks who play tournaments do. It helps to remind you of the wonderful people who curl and the great memories they share,” she says.

John and Tori live in Altoona. Elijah just graduated from college a year ago and lives in West Des Moines. Tucker is in Ankeny.

Tori and John are on the Des Moines Curling Club Board and share a mission to build a community willing to help them build a dedicated curling facility, the first for Iowa.

“We are passionate about our sport. Our initiatives are to build membership, engagement and passion for the sport of curling. We are actively fundraising for a dedicated curling facility. Our website is [dmcurling.com](http://dmcurling.com),” Tori says.

### **Smailbegovics appreciate the flexibility of disc golf**

Adnan Smailbegovic, his wife, Karla, and their daughter, Nadia, frequently play disc golf together.

“Disc golf is something we enjoy with our toddlers and dogs,” Adnan says.

The Smailbegovic family enjoys disc golf, as it provides time together with exercise, and it allows them to play with their dogs outside.

“We can get some fresh air, get some steps in and, every once in a while, I throw a decent disc,” he says.

Adnan cherishes the fact that he and his family share a love for this sport, and they are fortunate to reside in the Des Moines metro area, which is a haven for disc golf enthusiasts.

“The abundance of courses in Iowa offers us thrilling adventures, with each course presenting a unique challenge and a chance to explore our



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# FEATURE

state,” he says.

When they’re not on the courses, the family likes to shop for golf discs for fun. There are different weights and types, so players often buy, sell and trade discs to figure out what weight and style work best for them.

“I recently took Nadia to Titan Disc Golf to buy used discs,” Adnan says.

Adnan relishes playing disc golf with his friends, family and pets. He values the quality time spent pursuing a hobby he loves with people he loves.

“Disc golf is a sport that allows me to explore different courses and terrains, all while enjoying the outdoors with my family,” he says. “I appreciate the flexibility of the sport, as I can play it casually or participate in local tournaments and disc golf leagues.”

Adnan explains that disc golf is similar to golf but with one slight difference.

“The golf ball is replaced with a plastic disc thrown by hand,” he says. “You can expect different terrains and challenges from the tee to the disc golf basket in different parks.”

Adnan dispels the misconception that disc golf is a sport only for high schoolers. In reality, it’s a game enjoyed by everyone, from kids to elders, highlighting its inclusiveness and accessibility for all age groups.

Disc golf got Adnan and his family to go outdoors.

“Disc golf got me to become active while exploring the state of Iowa and different courses within the state,” he says.

Disc golf piqued Adnan’s interest because of its low entry cost.

“You can start playing with a basic three-disc set, readily available at your local sporting center,” he says. “Alternatively, many of us opt for



Adnan and Karla Smailbegovic can enjoy disc golf with their daughter, Nadia, and the family dogs.

second-hand discs, which are just as good and significantly cheaper.”

Adnan says Titan Disc Golf is a great place to buy them for a few bucks.

“I got five used discs for under \$50,” he says.

Disc golf courses are located all over Iowa and can be found by downloading the U-Disc app for free or by searching online.

Adnan says, if you want to try a new sport, get outdoors and check out the beautiful scenery in this state, check out your local disc golf course.

“Big Creek Disc Golf Course is our favorite to visit,” he says. ■

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## 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](http://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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## NEWS BRIEF

# MILLER catches state record fish



Mark Miller, of Altoona, caught a new state record yellow bullhead on April 12. The fish weighed 2.6 pounds and was 16.5 inches long. The fish was caught in Adair County and was released back into the lake. ■



## GIVING made simple

Wrigley spearheads local Crayon Initiative.

It was an ordinary day of reading in 2015 for Norman Wrigley, owner/instructor of East Coast Tae Kwon Do in Altoona.

He thumbed through the pages of whatever random magazine he had picked up by chance, not particularly engaged by any one thing. But then he stumbled onto an article about an organization called The Crayon Initiative (TCI).

"I thought it was an incredible idea," Wrigley says. "I thought this could be a great program to support since I had many young students, and working with crayons would be fun for them and be a program they could connect with on a personal level, enticing them to get involved."

The Crayon Initiative (TCI) is a non-profit organization located in Danville, California, that collects crayons from the general public, recycles them into new crayons and donates them to children's hospitals across the United States. Currently, Iowa has four hospitals that participate in the program.

Wrigley and his company began collecting crayons in 2016, gathering the colorful pieces of wax from various schools, families and organizations, and shipping them to California. Naturally, things were the busiest at the end of the school year.

"The kids are done with school, and I reach out to my contacts for each school and ask to support us each year, and I am happy to say we always get a big 'yes,'" Wrigley says. "I offer to supply the school with anything they may need, like posters, flyers or collection bins, but most are pretty self reliant now. All I have to do is schedule a date and time to stop by after school is out and pick up my crayons."

This year, Wrigley expanded his effort, reaching out to 15 new schools.

This is Wrigley's 31st year in martial arts. He has owned his own school in Altoona since 2010.

After discovering TCI, Wrigley thought it would be a great program to be involved with for many different reasons.

"Our students are required to give back to our communities through some community service, but our little students are limited on what they can do due to age and availability," he says. "I thought being involved with a program like this would be a great fit for our little ones to be included with helping our own school grow as well as supporting TCI."

Martial arts is much more than just punching, kicking and breaking boards, Wrigley says.

"It also has a huge amount of building character, learning to do and choosing the right things, making time for others and doing something for other people without a thought or concern of getting anything in return," he says. "We aim to be part of the process to produce great humans overall." ■



At the end of the school year, Norman Wrigley collects used crayons from schools to give to The Crayon Initiative. They are made into new crayons and given to hospitals for patients to use.

## ALTOONA Public Library news

Looking for something to do this summer? The library is the best place for free activities and reading challenges for all ages starting June 1. Find out more at [altoonalibrary.com](http://altoonalibrary.com).

**Summer Reading Rainbow Run – all ages. Saturday, June 1 at 10 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.** Run or walk your way along the trail by the library. Come wearing white and see how colorful you can get. We'll be handing out library swag to participants completing the mile-long route. Registration is required.

### Adult Programming

**Splat Studio (new date and time), for ages 18 and older - Tuesday, June 4 from 6-8 p.m. For ages 60 and older - Tuesday, June 4, from 1-3 p.m.** If you have a desire to dabble in acrylics, we've got an adult art studio for you. We'll bring the supplies; you bring your inner artist. Registration required.

**Watch What You Read, Saturday, June 8 at 2 p.m.** Come watch a movie based on a popular book. We'll provide the popcorn. This month we're watching "Argylle" (2024). No registration required.

**Bridgerton High Tea, Saturday, June 22 at 1 p.m.** Join us for an afternoon of tea, treats and trivia in honor of the newest season of "Bridgerton." Costumes encouraged but not required. Registration required.

**Hand Sewing Basics, Wednesday, June 26 at 6 p.m.** Ever want to fix your own clothes or make some new ones? Come learn the basic stitches that you'll need to get started, along with everything you'll need to set up your own sewing kit. Registration required.

### Children's Programming

**Tales Around Town, Wednesdays at 10 a.m. (June 5 - July 31)**

Storytime is on the move. Join us at a different location each week for storytime fun and firsthand experiences. Check the online calendar for location information. No registration required.

**Crafternoon, Thursday, June 6, from 4-5 p.m.** Stop by the library to create a fun summer craft. Available while supplies last. Grades preK-6. No registration required.

**Meet the Maker Hub: Cricut, Wednesday, June 19, from 3-4 p.m.** Come to the library and discover how the Cricut works. Learn about other Maker Hub tools in future sessions of this program; check our calendar for details. Grades 2-6. Registration required.

### Teen Programming

**Will It Waffle?: Summer Edition, Monday, June 10 from 3-4 p.m.** Come make waffle creations such as s'mores, apple pie and ice cream sandwiches, and color your world — and your food — with rainbow waffles. See what colorful concoctions you can come up with. Grades 6-12. Registration required.

**Squeegee Painting, Monday, June 17 from 6-7 p.m.** Ditch the paintbrush and try a new, colorful way to paint — with squeegees. Drop in and create abstract works of art or reveal a hidden illustration. Grades 6-12. No registration required.

**Rubber Duck Cosplay, Monday, June 24 from 6-7 p.m.** Using Sharpies, paint, clay and whatever else we can find, create custom cosplaying ducks based on your favorite fandoms! Drop in to create one or a whole flock. Grades 6-12. No registration required. ■

# BACK home

Altoona is forever the place for Machir.

Jen Machir grew up on the east side of Des Moines, so her childhood was spent playing soccer at the Sam Wise sports complex, making countless trips to the Altoona Walmart and spending summers at Adventureland.

After growing up and living in Waukee for awhile, Machir wanted to return.

“I absolutely missed the community feel like we have here in Altoona,”

Machir says. “So I begged my husband, Steven, to move here, although he isn’t from this side of town.”

He agreed.

The Machirs began building their home in the Scenic Ridge neighborhood in February 2021 and officially moved in during May 2022. Their home, which sits on just under an acre of land, is nestled on the hill backing Terrace Hills Golf Course.

“We have a beautiful pond in view, and our cul-de-sac is filled with the most amazing families, lots of tiny tots who all play together and large yards for gatherings,” Machir says. “We just adore our little slice of heaven here.”

While the Machirs had a gorgeous house in Waukee, it simply never felt like home.

“Home is the people around you, the neighbors who wave at you as you drive by and who love the community you love,” she says.

It helps that the Machirs’ neighborhood gives off the feel of camping during the summer, with birds chirping and frogs on the pond.

The family stays busy with the children’s activities.

“Spring Creek soccer was a hit for our daughter last year as well as basketball at the Altoona Campus,” Machir says. “I am sure we will be getting involved in so much more.”

And it truly is all about community for Machir.

“Having just opened Farmhouse Venue and Studio in Old Town, I can, without a doubt, say that the community support and hype for entrepreneurs is unmatched here,” she says. “I had a studio in West Des Moines for nearly eight years, and I had never received even a fraction of the kind words, shares and mentions as I have here.”

It’s wonderful to see where Altoona is heading, too.

“I have seen plans for that growth,” she says. “Melissa at the Chamber is such a great advocate for the city, and I love her vision for all the fun and unique things they want to bring here. I cannot wait to see what Altoona does in the next five years.” ■



Jen Machir and her husband, Steven, have found Altoona to be a welcoming community for their family.

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# HOW should I handle my finances after graduation?

Life after graduation can bring a new wave of opportunities and financial responsibilities. Below are key tips you can implement to make the most of this exciting new chapter.



**Create a budget:** A budget is an important tool to get finances in order and keep yourself accountable. The 50/30/20 approach allocates your money into three separate categories: 50% goes to essential expenses; 30% goes to wants; 20% goes to savings and debt repayments.

**Pay down student debt:** Budgeting will give you a head start in prioritizing student loan payments and any other debt. It's important to stay on top of making the monthly payments, and it's a good idea to pay more than the minimum payment if you can. This helps lower the principal of your balance and pay off

student loans faster.

**Open a credit card and start building credit:** If you have no credit history, consider opening a credit builder credit card or another introductory card to get started. Use the card and pay off balances on time and in full to establish good credit. In some circumstances, credit scores and/or credit history could be required to rent or buy a home, obtain utility services or enter other contracts.

**Pay your bills on time:** It's crucial to make all payments — including credit card balances, student loan payments, rent and other payments — on time. Late payments often involve hefty fees and will negatively impact credit scores. Consider setting up automatic payments and calendar reminders before payment due dates.

**Establish a retirement plan:** The sooner you start saving for retirement, the better off you will be in the future. See if your employer offers a retirement savings plan such as a Roth 401(k). If there's an employer

match on your contributions, it may be advantageous to contribute more than the minimum amount.

**Set up an emergency savings fund:** Unexpected costs often turn up at the most inopportune times. It's important to be prepared for when costly events occur. Whether it's an injury, a broken-down car, or losing your job, an emergency fund will give you a leg up.

**Seek out sound financial advice:** There is a lot of financial information on the internet and social media platforms. When you are looking for advice, pay attention to its credibility. There is a big difference between advice given by a Certified Financial Planner® and a social media influencer.

Keep these tips in mind to get started on the right track today. ■

Information provided by Mary Simon, VP, Altoona Branch Manager, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5480, MSimon@BankersTrust.com. Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.

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## FAITH

By Nathan Anenson

# GRACE for parents

Parenting. It's a wonderful gift full of joy and fulfillment AND a significant challenge full of disappointments and worries. Many parents find themselves overwhelmed trying to juggle all the demands of life and navigate all the complex decisions in raising kids. Here are three words of grace to put parenting in perspective.



**No. 1: It's OK to be different.** As parents, we often fear our kids will miss out if we don't do what everyone else is doing. But what if what everyone else is doing isn't creating thriving kids? Maybe your kid doesn't need a phone and social media yet. Maybe your kid doesn't need umpteen different activities to be successful. As parents, what are your big goals for your kids? Outstanding character? A deep conviction that they are loved? An eternity with Jesus? You are free to align your time and resources with what matters for the long haul and into eternity. Let Jesus be your guide and know it's OK to be different when you are following Him.

**No. 2: God uses the little things.** We naturally give our attention to big things: big stores, big bank accounts and big popularity. But so much of what influences our kids happens in the little, ordinary and mundane moments of life. The little things you do add up over time to set the foundation for your kids. The time you make for conversation at the dinner table, the prayers you say at bedtime, the stories you tell your kids about your life, the priority you give to bringing your kids to church — all these little things add up to make a big difference. Don't underestimate the power of simply giving your full attention to your kids. God uses the little things.

**No. 3: God works in the mess.** No family is perfect. That was the case for a young man named Timothy in the Bible. His mom rebelled against the traditions of their family, and his dad either died when he was young or was just absent. But, somehow, through all the messiness, God shaped him into a man who made a difference. When life gets complicated, when we make mistakes and face setbacks, we can focus on the mess, or we can focus on the God who works in the mess for our good. When our situation isn't our "Plan A," God is bigger than our disappointments and greater than our regrets.

Part of the gift of parenting is the realization of how much we need Jesus. Parenting stretches us and brings us to the end of ourselves. That's the perfect place for God's grace to take over and get us through. Parenting was God's idea in the beginning. And, even today, He sticks with us every step of the way. ■

Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson, Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-4818.

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# Life and Hope After Stroke

## Ankeny man shares his inspiring story of rehabilitation, recovery

It was 3:00 in the morning and Brian Clark couldn't sleep. He felt off, so he made his way to the kitchen to retrieve his smartwatch, which was charging there. As he fumbled to put his watch on, he couldn't get his left arm to respond. He went back to his bedroom to awaken his wife, who thought he was sleepwalking when he mumbled a garbled request for help.

Suddenly Brian's left leg went out from underneath him, and he couldn't get back up. His wife called 911, and paramedics were on the scene within minutes. As Brian rode in the ambulance to the hospital, he couldn't help but think, "Is this it? Am I done with my life? Is there more, or not?"

Brian said he resolved then and there that he wasn't going to let this be the end for him. When he arrived at the hospital, they quickly determined he was having a stroke and by 4:30 that morning, he was in surgery having the blood clot in his brain removed.

For Brian and the one in four adults over the age of 25 who will experience a stroke in their lifetime, there is life – and hope – after stroke. Rehabilitation can build strength, capability and confidence. It can also help someone who experiences a stroke continue daily activities, despite the effects of their stroke.

There are more than 7 million stroke survivors living in the U.S. today. But

not all strokes – and not all stroke survivors – are the same. Finding the right rehabilitation plan is vital to recovery after stroke. The American Stroke Association has developed standards to help rehabilitation facilities provide consistent, high-quality care for individuals as they recover from stroke.

Facilities that have agreed to participate in the Association's post-acute stroke standards program agree to follow the Association's treatment guidelines and have made a commitment to providing care that is based on standards aligned with American Stroke Association science and vetted by stroke rehabilitation experts.

Thanks to a wonderful team that included PT, OT, and speech therapists at On with Life in Ankeny, one of several Iowa facilities participating in the Association's post-acute stroke standards program, Brian has experienced a nearly full recovery. While he still has challenges with his left hand and arm, he is back to running his own business and the life that he loves.

"I told myself when I arrived for in-

patient rehab that I was walking out on my own," Brian said. "It's a really long journey. Progress is literally measured in 1/16th of an inch, one step a week."

Brian said that his care team took the time to get to know him as an individual and what motivated him, which in his case included a desire to get back onto the golf course. As a result, golf became a large part of Brian's unique rehab plan. Brian also has incorporated strength training and cross-fit to help him continue his progress.

Nearly three years after his stroke, Brian says he continues to work on his recovery and revisits his care team for "tune ups" every few months. Together they work to map out a program for his continued recovery.

"In the rehab experience, you have a lot of time to think to yourself," Brian said. "You think about how precious those moments you have with your kids and grandkids are, and you want more of that time. So now you cherish every minute you've got with your son, your daughter, your wife, your grandkids. It becomes so much more important."



Brian dancing with his daughter at her wedding.



### Congratulations to the following Iowa facilities who have joined the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association's post-acute stroke care initiative.

These providers have agreed to follow the Association's treatment guidelines and have made a commitment to providing care that is based on standards aligned with American Stroke Association science and vetted by stroke rehabilitation experts:

- Community Memorial Hospital, Sumner
- Finley Health Foundation, Dubuque
- Genesis Medical Center, DeWitt
- Guttenberg Municipal Hospital, Guttenberg
- Jackson Country Regional Health Center, Maquoketa
- NewAldaya Lifescapes, Cedar Falls
- Jones Regional Medical Center (UnityPoint Health), Anamosa
- West Ridge Care Center, Cedar Rapids
- Good Samaritan Society- LeMars, LeMars
- Sanford Sheldon Medical Center, Sheldon
- St. Lukes (UnityPoint Health), Sioux City
- Cedar Ridge Village (Pivotal Health Care), West Des Moines
- Hearthstone, A Ministry of WesleyLife, Pella
- Kennybrooke Village (Pivotal Health Care), Grimes
- Mary Greeley Medical Center, Ames
- On With Life, Inc., Ankeny
- Prairie Vista Village (Pivotal Health Care), Altoona
- Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital (University of Iowa), Coralville
- Kahl Hom, Davenport
- Lone Tree Health Care Center, Inc., Lone Tree
- Van Buren County Hospital, Keosauqua
- Audubon County Memorial Hospital, Audubon
- Midlands Living Center, LCC, Council Bluffs
- Myrtue Medical Center, Harlan
- Hegg Health Center, Rock Valley
- Lucas County Health Center, Chariton
- Davis County Hospital, Bloomfield
- Buchanan County Health Center, Independence
- Solon Retirement Village, Solon
- Independence Village, Waukee
- Gundersen Palmer, West Union



Brian working on his golf game with a therapist.

Learn more about this initiative at  
[heart.org/PostAcuteStroke](https://heart.org/PostAcuteStroke)

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American Heart Association.  
 Mission:Lifeline<sup>®</sup>  
 Stroke

# ALTOONA

## MAY 2024

**City of Altoona • 900 Venbury Drive • Altoona, IA 50009 • 515-967-5136**

### CITY HALL

**900 Venbury Drive**

**Altoona, IA 50009**

**Phone: 515-967-5136**

**FAX: 515-967-0842**

**Open 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Monday – Friday**

**Mayor Dean O'Connor**

**515-967-5136**

**City Council Members**

**Jeremy Boka 515-965-0951**

**Scott Duer 515-418-2227**

**Josh Dunwoody 515-720-8891**

**Jerry Evans 515-967-5136**

**Julie Stewart 515-967-5136**

**City Administrator**

**515-967-5136**

**City Clerk**

**515-967-5136**

**Police Chief**

**515-967-5132**

**Fire Chief**

**515-967-2216**

**Library Director**

**515-967-3881**

**Fax: 515-967-6934**

**Water Billing**

**515-967-5136**

**Building Department/  
Code Enforcement**

**515-967-5138**

**Building Official**

**515-967-5138**

**Planning & Zoning  
Department**

**515-967-5136**

**Public Works Director**

**515-967-5136**

### MEMORIAL DAY

City Hall is closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 27, 2024. Garbage and recycling pickup will be delayed one day due to the holiday. Monday customers will have their garbage and recycling picked up on Tuesday, May 28, while Tuesday customers' pickup will be on Wednesday, May 29.



### BASS PRO DRIVE CLOSURE BEGINS MAY 28

Crews will completely close a portion of Bass Pro Drive NW between the west roundabout and the entrance/access drive for Fairfield Inn and Suites beginning Tuesday, May 28. The closure will remain in place for about one month, and traffic is asked to detour to travel on Tallgrass Pkwy and Adventureland Drive to access businesses along Bass Pro Drive. For the latest details on this project, please visit [www.altoona-iowa.com](http://www.altoona-iowa.com).

### HAINES PARK SPLASH PAD NOW OPEN

The city's latest amenity, a new splash pad at Haines Park, opened this month with a special celebration ceremony. Mayor, Dean O'Connor spoke and invited local resident, Ellie Wagoner, to activate the splash pad at a special event on May 21. Ellie wrote to the mayor and the park board several years ago, advocating for this splash pad, and we're excited to see her big idea finally become reality. Following the remarks, families enjoyed the splash pad, and popsicles, courtesy of Altoona's Fareway store.

To be the first to know about future city events, be sure to follow the city on Facebook, and visit [www.altoona-iowa.com](http://www.altoona-iowa.com).

### YARD IMPROVEMENTS? CALL BEFORE DIGGING

If your spring yard work includes any digging, please call Iowa One Call 1-800-292-8989. Iowa One Call will mark your utility lines on your property. This service is provided for free and can help you avoid planting or digging where utilities are located.

### PROTECTING AGAINST MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes can be dangerous with their threat of transmitting diseases, such as encephalitis to humans and heartworms to pets. This is why beginning in April and continuing into October, depending on weather and mosquito count, the city periodically sprays for mosquitoes. Altoona uses chemicals and techniques for spraying that meet EPA guidelines, but residents can request that their area not be sprayed by contacting the Parks Department by calling 967-5203 or emailing [parksdpt@altoona-iowa.com](mailto:parksdpt@altoona-iowa.com). Please include your address and phone number in your request.



You can help control mosquitos in your property by clearing any potential breeding sites such as removing items that might hold standing water, regularly cleaning pools, bird baths, plant pots, etc., and keeping grass cut short and shrubbery well-trimmed.

### BRUSH DROP OFF

Reminder that the next opportunity to drop off brush is not until Saturday, Sept. 7 near the Public Utilities Department. Watch for more information on the city's website or social media accounts later this summer.

### RUCKUS COMING TO ALTOONA

The Ruckus Music Festival is moving to Altoona and Adventureland Park on Friday, June 7 and Saturday, June 8. Residents can expect road closures for the festival on 34th Ave SW from north of Aldi to south of the drives accessing Best Western, Gilibertos and Brick & Ivy Rooftop. Residents wishing to attend the festival can use code RAMS15 to receive 15% off a weekend pass to the festival. Tickets and festival information is available at [www.ruckusiowa.com](http://www.ruckusiowa.com).

# 2023 WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR ALTOONA WATER SUPPLY

This report contains important information regarding the water quality in our water system. The source of our water is groundwater. Our water quality testing shows the following results:

CONTAMINANT	MCL - (MCLG)	Compliance		Date	Violation	Source
		Type	Value & (Range)			
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb) [TTHM]	80 (N/A)	LRAA	52.00 (52 - 52)	09/30/2023	No	By-products of drinking water chlorination
Total Haloacetic Acids (ppb) [HAA5]	60 (N/A)	LRAA				
6.00 (6 - 6)	09/30/2023	No	By-products of drinking water disinfection			
Copper (ppm)	AL=1.3 (1.3)	90th	0.487 (0.0874 - 0.656)	2022	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives
Lead (ppb)	AL=15 (0)	90th	0.00 (ND - 2)	2022	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits
<b>950 - DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM</b>						
Chlorine (ppm)	MRDL=4.0 (MRDLG=4.0)	RAA	1.4 (0.5 - 2.16)	09/30/2023	No	Water additive used to control microbes
<b>01 - FINISHED WATER AT PLANT #1 (WELL #2)</b>						
Gross Alpha, inc (pCi/L)	15 (0)	SGL	4.78	07/11/2023	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4 (4)	SGL	1.4	05/12/2020	No	Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Barium (ppm)	2 (2)	SGL	0.014	05/12/2020	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)	N/A (N/A)	SGL	157	06/19/2023	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Added to water during treatment process
Nitrate [as N] (ppm)	10 (10)	SGL	0.700	2023	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>02 - FINISHED WATER AT PLANT #2 (WELL #3)</b>						
Gross Alpha, inc (pCi/L)	15 (0)	SGL	2.45	11/02/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2 (2)	SGL	0.0176	05/12/2020	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4 (4)	SGL	1.6	05/12/2020	No	Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Sodium (ppm)	N/A (N/A)	SGL	141	06/19/2023	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Added to water during treatment process
Nitrate [as N] (ppm)	10 (10)	SGL	0.500	2023	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>03 - FINISHED WATER AT PLANT #3 (WELL #4)</b>						
Gross Alpha, inc (pCi/L)	15 (0)	SGL	2.67	11/02/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)	N/A (N/A)	SGL	131	06/19/2023	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Added to water during treatment process
Nitrate [as N] (ppm)	10 (10)	SGL	0.600	2023	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits

Note: Contaminants with dates indicate results from the most recent testing done in accordance with regulations.

## DEFINITIONS

- Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) – The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- ppb -- parts per billion.
- ppm -- parts per million.
- pCi/L – picocuries per liter
- N/A – Not applicable
- ND -- Not detected
- RAA – Running Annual Average
- Treatment Technique (TT) – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
- Action Level (AL) – The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG) – The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) – The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- SGL – Single Sample Result
- RTCR – Revised Total Coliform Rule
- NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Units

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water posed a health risk. More information about contaminants or potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. ALTOONA WATER SUPPLY is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

## SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

This water supply obtains its water from the sandstone and dolomite of the Cambrian-Ordovician aquifer. The Cambrian-Ordovician aquifer was determined to have low susceptibility to contamination because the characteristics of the aquifer and overlying materials provide natural protection from contaminants at the land surface. The Cambrian-Ordovician wells will have low susceptibility to surface contaminants such as leaking underground storage tanks, contaminant spills, and excess fertilizer application. A detailed evaluation of your source water was completed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and is available from the Water Operator at 515-967-4464.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding this information or how you can get involved in decisions regarding the water system, please contact ALTOONA WATER SUPPLY at 515-967-4464.

Be sure to check for cancelations.

## CAP Theatre presents "Frozen Jr."

May 24 - June 9 on Fridays at 7 p.m.  
and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m.  
CAP Theatre in Altoona

CAP Theatre presents the enchanting modern classic "Disney's Frozen Jr." This amazing show brings Elsa, Anna and the magical land of Arendelle to life, onstage. The show features all of the memorable songs from the animated film, with music and lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, plus five new songs written for the Broadway production.

A story of true love and acceptance between sisters, Frozen Jr. expands upon the emotional relationship and journey between Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood. With a cast of beloved characters and loaded with magic, adventure and plenty of humor, Frozen Jr., is sure to thaw even the coldest heart.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors and \$10 for students. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [www.captheatre.org](http://www.captheatre.org).

## Book signing

Sept. 7, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hidden Treasures, Altoona

Shelba Oberito will hold a book signing of her latest book, "On My Way Home," her third children's book. This 28-page children's Christian fiction addresses the belief in an eternal home.



## Altoona Music in the Park

Last Sundays of the month, May through August, 6 p.m.

Haines Park Outdoor Stage, 700 Block of Third Ave. S.E.

Enjoy free concerts in the park monthly during the summer, May 26, June 30, July 28 and Aug. 25. Sponsored by Altoona Parks and Recreation Board. CAP Theatre will provide popcorn and pop for sale to support the children's theatre.



## Live music events

• **May 24, 10 p.m., Royce Johns**, country music, Finish Line Show Lounge, Prairie Meadows. Must be 21 or older.

• **May 25, 10 p.m., Lincoln Highway**, contemporary country, Finish Line Show Lounge, Prairie Meadows. Must be 21 or older.

## Des Moines Con

May 31-June 2

Hy-Vee Hall at Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines

A celebration of all things nerdy. From Marvel to Star Wars to LEGOs and around the universe and back, this con has you covered.



## Celebrasian

May 24-25

Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St., Des Moines  
[www.iowaasianalliance.com](http://www.iowaasianalliance.com)

A weekend of Asian cuisine, music and entertainment. Vendors and performers will fill the area with an authentic celebration of Asian culture.

## Wild Lights Festival

Through May 27, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines

[www.blankparkzoo.com](http://www.blankparkzoo.com)

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



## CITYVIEW's Summer Stir - Downtown Des Moines

Friday, June 21, 5-9 p.m.

Court Avenue District, Des Moines

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$30 at the door). For more information and for tickets, visit [www.summerstirs.dmcityview.com](http://www.summerstirs.dmcityview.com).

## Vietnam War Living History Event

Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, 7105 N.W. 70th Ave., Johnston

Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and  
Sunday, June 2, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Discover what life was like for an American servicemember during the Vietnam War. Meet historians, explore historically accurate campsites, and see period military vehicles. Admission is free.



Be sure to check for cancelations.

## Events at The Brenton Arboretum

Various dates

25141 260th St., Dallas Center

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

TheBrentonArboretum.org/events.

- **Nature Club**, varying times, register by age group: June 6 and 20, July 4 and 18, Aug. 1 and 15, Sept. 5 and 19, Oct. 3 and 17, Nov. 7 and 21, Dec. 5 and 19.

- May 30-31, **Animal Odyssey camp**.
- June 2, 1-3 p.m., **Go Hug a Tree**.
- June 3-4, **Animal Odyssey camp**, 9-11:30 a.m.
- June 6, 6-7 p.m., **Outdoor Foraging with Polk County Conservation**.

**County Conservation.**

- June 8, 7-9 p.m., **Wine on the Prairie**.



## Iowa Take Steps Walk

Saturday, June 22, 9 a.m.

Iowa State Capitol Grounds

The public is invited to join the Iowa Take Steps Walk to benefit the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation. The event starts at 9 a.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. Learn more at [cctakesteps.org](http://cctakesteps.org).

## MORE EVENTS

- **May 25: Decoration Day and Historic Baseball.** Living History Farms explores the origins of Memorial Day. Interpreters will demonstrate Decoration Day at 1 p.m. with a historical baseball game to close out the day. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale. [www.lhf.org](http://www.lhf.org)

- **May 25: Strawberry Picking.** Gather strawberries for some homemade jam, a strawberry pie, or whatever your heart may desire. Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge. [www.centergroveorchard.com](http://www.centergroveorchard.com)

- **May 26: A Finesse Family Cookout.** "The Finesse" invites people to a soulful celebration where music and food fuse together for one great night. xBk, 1159 24th St., Des Moines. [www.xbklive.com](http://www.xbklive.com)

- **May 31 - June 2: Greek Food Festival.** A weekend celebration of delicious food, music and dancing. 1110 35th St., Des Moines. [www.facebook.com/StGeorgeDSM](http://www.facebook.com/StGeorgeDSM)

- **May 31: Summer Nights Live Street Party.** Two nights of live music and local vendors. Free. Indianola Town Square, Indianola. [www.indianolachamber.com](http://www.indianolachamber.com)

- **June 1: Iowa Craft Brew Festival.** Unlimited samples of the best brews and ciders Iowa has to offer. Not to mention plenty of food vendors, games and non-alcoholic options as well. Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines. [www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com](http://www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com)

- **June 1: Family Fest.** Dance performances, acrobatic aerial displays and plenty of fun for the whole family (it is in the name after all). Starting at 11 a.m. Johnston Town Center, 6245 Merle Hay Road, Johnston. [www.johnstontowncenter.com](http://www.johnstontowncenter.com)

- **June 1-2: Iowa State Fair Flea Market.** All types of goods to purchase from antiques to collectibles, home décor and so much more. 4-H building, Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines. [www.iowastatefairgrounds.org](http://www.iowastatefairgrounds.org)

- **June 3: Wine and Craft Beer Fest.** Plenty of samples of the best wine and craft beer Iowa has to offer, from 5-8 p.m. at the Enabling Garden, 1050 First Ave. S., Altoona. [www.altoonachamber.org](http://www.altoonachamber.org)

- **June 2: 14th annual Whirlythings Garden Art Show.** An exciting evening for local art enthusiasts. Several mediums will be on display starting at noon at 4320 Franklin Ave., Des Moines.

[www.whirlythings.com](http://www.whirlythings.com)

- **June 6, 13, 20, 27: Ankeny Beats and Eats.** Recurring Thursdays featuring drinks, food and entertainment for all ages. Ankeny Market and Pavilion, 715 W. First St. [www.ankenyiowa.gov](http://www.ankenyiowa.gov)

- **June 6-8: Governors Days.** A three-day festival in Grimes with food trucks, live entertainment and parade. Grimes South Sports Complex, 750 S James St., Grimes. [www.governorsdays.com](http://www.governorsdays.com)

- **June 7-9: Pride Fest.** There were more than 40,000 attendees at last year's celebration. Live performances, food, drinks, all in the name of Pride. Historic East Village, Des Moines. [www.capitalcitypride.org/pride-fest](http://www.capitalcitypride.org/pride-fest)

- **June 13-15: Johnston Green Days 2024.** Johnston's annual community celebration complete with parade, carnival, games and more. Terra Park, 6400 Pioneer Parkway, Johnston. [www.johnstongreendays.org](http://www.johnstongreendays.org)

- **June 15: Macksburg Skillet Toss.** Think you can toss it with the best of them? If not, there's still a parade. Macksburg City Park, Macksburg. [www.macksburgskilletthrow.com](http://www.macksburgskilletthrow.com)

- **June 15: The Barn Town Get Down** will feature at least 50 breweries, meaderies and cideries from across the country. Barn Town Brewing, 9500 S.E. University Ave., Waukee. [www.barntownbrewing.com](http://www.barntownbrewing.com)

- **June 15: Neighbor's Day Celebration.** Hosted by the Iowa Juneteenth Organization. From noon to 7 p.m. at Western Gateway Park, 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines. [www.iowaJuneteenth.org](http://www.iowaJuneteenth.org)

- **June 22: Cajun Fest.** Get ready to put some south in your mouth. An all-day celebration of Cajun culture, from food to music and back to food again. Cowles Commons, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines. [www.cajunfestiowa.com](http://www.cajunfestiowa.com)

- **June 22: Ankeny Pride Parade.** This will be the third installment of this parade with food, fun and festivities throughout the evening. From 4-9 p.m. at Ankeny Market and Pavilion, 715 W. First St. [www.ankenypride.org](http://www.ankenypride.org)

- **June 23: Iowa Reptile Show.** Speak directly with some of the top reptile breeders with access to thousands of reptiles, amphibians, feeders, invertebrates, supplies and more available to the public. Starting at 10 a.m. Hilton Garden Inn, 205 S. 64th St., West Des Moines. [www.coldbloodedexpos.com](http://www.coldbloodedexpos.com) ■

# SUMMER FUN IN JOHNSTON 2024

THE YARD  
JOHNSTON TOWN CENTER

## EDUCATION By T.K. West

### MEET Callie Avon

Teaching ESOL at Delaware Elementary



Callie and Nick Avon with children Leah Peebles and Oliver Avon. Photo by Annaberry Images

Originally from Salina, Kansas, Callie Avon completed an undergraduate degree in elementary education at Kansas Wesleyan and a master's degree at Baker University. She spent the first four years of her career teaching in a fourth-grade classroom at Stewart Elementary School in Salina.

Then, in August 2015, Avon relocated with her family to Altoona for her husband's job. She first worked in the Des Moines Public School District for seven years before joining the Southeast Polk Community School District. Avon has been in the elementary education field for 13 years. This is her second year with the district and her first year as an ESOL teacher at Delaware Elementary School.

"I love who I work with — the students, families, teachers, administration and staff," Avon says.

She adds, she likes working with elementary school children because she enjoys getting to know them, their interests and hobbies, their cultures, their traditions, and who they are as a person. She also enjoys their natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

As an ESOL educator, Avon works with students in grades K-5. There are currently 13 different languages represented at her school. Avon's goal is to increase her students' English proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Her students also teach her about their first language.

"One of my favorite things is to witness my students' progress and growth. Seeing them gain confidence in their language skills and academic achievements is rewarding," Avon says.

When not teaching, Avon enjoys being outside, walking, bike riding and reading. This summer she is looking forward to spending time with her family, including her husband and two children, spending time with her friends and traveling. She is looking forward to having her daughter, who is a freshman at the University of Iowa, home for the summer. ■



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**TUNES AT TWILIGHT**  
JULY 18 - AUG. 8 - SEPT. 12  
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# A HELPING paw

## Stokeses open Prelude Assistance Dogs.

In the business world, it's said that, in order to succeed, one must not take things personally.

For Emily and Leanne Stokes, that's impossible. Their business, Prelude Assistance Dogs, located in Altoona, is personal.

Emily is the president and head trainer for the company, launched in 2023, while Leanne serves as the vice president and treasurer.

After having been diagnosed with PTSD in college, Emily found herself in need of help. Little did she know, a helping hand wasn't coming — but a paw was.

Emily was given a service dog, Louise, and it changed her life.

"Before a service dog, I had tried a lot of different therapies and medications," she says. "They were definitely helpful, but nothing gave me my freedom and independence back like having Louise did."

The company's mission is to help others train their service dogs with professional guidance or pair individuals with an already trained service dog, no matter their background or financial status.

Prelude Assistance Dogs has three directors in Emily and Leanne Stokes and Catherine McDowell, as well as a number of volunteer puppy raisers and 12 currently active therapy dog volunteers who go on group outings.

Service dogs are dogs trained to perform specific tasks to help mitigate symptoms of a disability for their handler, Emily says. And the training isn't easy.

"Service dog training entails an incredible amount of socialization and obedience training," she says. "They have to be able to handle the world that their handler navigates — restaurants, planes, public transit, travel, school, etc. Nearly anywhere their handler goes, a service dog can follow."

In addition to socialization and obedience, service dogs must be trained to perform "tasks." A task is a specific behavior the dog does to help relieve symptoms of the individual's disability, Emily says.

"This could look like picking up dropped keys, laying behind their handler to keep others from crowding their personal space, alerting to the sound of a fire alarm for a hard of hearing handler, etc.," she says. "The possibilities truly do feel endless sometimes for what these incredible animals can learn to add to their human's life."

A therapy dog is a dog that is trained to give comfort to others. While a service dog focuses on one individual, a therapy dog can offer joy to many.

"These are dogs that visit hospitals, schools, libraries or continuing care facilities," Emily says. "They still have to have a great amount of obedience and socialization, as well as be able to tolerate a lot of different environments."

Since opening in 2023, Prelude has worked with about six service dog teams and 14 therapy dog teams, Emily says.

Prelude is a non-profit organization that runs primarily through donations, something that Leanne says is pivotal to the company's existence.

"We offer our services at low or no cost to the individual, and we simply cannot do that without community support," she says.

For more information, visit <https://www.preludeassistance dogs.org>. ■



Leanne and Emily Stokes

"It's been through the addition of MAPLE that we have been able to get the kids to talk."



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## HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich

### ADAPTING to stressors promotes health

Aaron Antonovsky was the first scholar to describe health as a continuum existing between the extremes of total absence of health and total health. Antonovsky and his contemporaries argued that the more a person comprehends the world around them, assigns meaning to experiences, and can manage stressful events, the better health he or she will express.

Humans are designed for self-healing and self-regulating — for living in a state of health that inherently prevents illness as opposed to treating disease. According to Super et al, “Sense of coherence reflects a coping capacity of people to deal with everyday life stressors.” As an individual’s capacity to cope with life stressors improves, so does health. Therefore, improving sense of coherence decreases the likelihood of poor lifestyle choices, health disease occurrence and mortality risk, while improving mental health and quality of life.

Chiropractic fits into Antonovsky’s idea of health because chiropractic promotes adaptability, rather than the treatment of disease. Wellness chiropractors recognize that physical, chemical and emotional stressors exist in our world and that these stressors affect the individual’s ability to adapt to their environment and diminish their ability to make healthy decisions. A neurological evaluation of a patient’s adaptability and stress patterns identify how chiropractic care can help restore a healthy nervous system that is prepared to adapt and respond to environmental stressors. Wellness chiropractors serve patients primarily through chiropractic adjustments to clear the nervous system. They also recognize how chiropractic care is supported by a healthy lifestyle and will provide recommendations congruent with the patient’s care plan to help them achieve total health. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

## HEALTH

By Nikki Morgan

### WEIGHT-LOSS medications

If you have ever tried to lose weight, whether it was 10 pounds or 100-plus pounds, you know what a mind game it can be. Today’s health and wellness industry is full of information and advice, and what is right today seems to be wrong tomorrow. You also may have found that losing weight is the easy part, but sustaining the weight loss is a different story. We all know how to drop a few pounds before a vacation, but keeping that weight off proves to be a challenge.



Weight loss medications have been around for decades. From amphetamines to antidepressants to thermogenic drugs and now peptides, medications have continued to evolve through science. While a healthy diet, exercise and adequate sleep remain the staple of a well-rounded weight loss program, sometimes it’s just not enough.

Glucagon-Like-Peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonists have taken center stage in the medical weight loss industry. You’ve likely already heard of Ozempic and Wegovy (semaglutide). These medications work by increasing insulin production and slowing gastric emptying to prolong the feeling of fullness and significantly reducing food cravings. In addition to weight loss, these medications are showing other promising health benefits. The FDA recently approved Wegovy (semaglutide) for use to reduce the risk of cardiovascular death, heart attack and stroke in either obese or overweight individuals.

GLP-1 agonists have become widely available, but use caution in selecting a provider. Safe prescribing should include a consultation with a medical provider, proper baseline lab work, and routine monitoring for efficacy and side effects. ■

Information provided by Nikki Morgan, DNP, ARNP, SkinFusion FX, 410 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-0587, www.skinfusionfx.com, nikki.skinfusionfx@gmail.com



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## PLAN AHEAD

By Sasha Mudlaff and  
Holly Peterson Miller

### 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.



## Plan Ahead for PEACE OF MIND

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## HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

### UNVEILING the health benefits of CBG and CBN

Cannabis' therapeutic realm expands beyond CBD and THC, unveiling lesser-known yet potent compounds like cannabigerol (CBG) and cannabinol (CBN).

CBG, dubbed the "mother cannabinoid," demonstrates promising potential in various realms. Studies suggest CBG has anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective and antimicrobial properties. Research in the Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics discusses CBG's efficacy against inflammatory bowel disease and neurodegenerative conditions like Huntington's disease.

CBG offers benefits beyond inflammation and neuroprotection. Evidence suggests CBG aids focus, boosts energy levels and promotes gut health. Such attributes make CBG a holistic choice for those seeking mental clarity, vitality and digestive wellness.

CBN intrigues with its sedative effects, presenting as a potential natural sleep aid. Research shows CBN's ability to prolong sleep duration. In addition, CBN showcases antibacterial potential, suggesting a role in combating antibiotic-resistant strains.

As research unfolds, CBG and CBN are poised to revolutionize cannabinoid-based therapeutics. To explore their potential, consider consulting a certified hemp professional at your nearest CBD store. ■



Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. References: Borrelli, Francesca, et al. "Colon Carcinogenesis Is Inhibited by the TRPM8 Antagonist Cannabigerol, a Cannabis-Derived Non-Psychotropic Cannabinoid." Carcinogenesis. Russo, Ethan B. "The Case for the Entourage Effect and Conventional Breeding of Clinical Cannabis: No 'Strain,' No Gain." Frontiers in Plant Science. Valdeolivas, Sara, et al. "Neuroprotective Properties of Cannabigerol in Huntington's Disease: Studies in R6/2 Mice and 3-Nitropropionate-Lesioned Mice." Neurotherapeutics.

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**SENIOR** By Stephanie Proper

## HEALTH benefits of plants — indoors and out

It's spring. I am looking forward to the warm weather. With the warm weather, it is time to dig out your trowel and gardening gloves — or maybe just eliminate the work and buy a nice potted plant. Either way, the long-awaited planting season is here.



There are so many mental and physical health benefits to gardening or simply caring for indoor potted plants. Just being around plants is beneficial. When humans breathe, we exhale carbon dioxide from the body and inhale oxygen. Plants do the opposite. They release oxygen for us to breathe and absorb the carbon dioxide that we exhale. Plants help eliminate harmful toxins and purify the air.

Indoor plants have been found to reduce stress levels. House plants can often help their caretakers feel more soothed and comforted. Some studies show that, when there are plants in the rooms of patients recovering from illness or surgery, they required fewer pain medications and had shorter hospital stays. Plants can also help add moisture to a room, which increases humidity and helps prevent dry coughs or sore throats.

Good houseplants to purchase for your home are spider plants, ivy, ferns and more. These plants are known for filtering toxins and improving mental health by boosting color, which can reduce anxiety. For seniors who have a hard time getting out of the house, caring for a plant could provide a much-needed activity that could help lessen loneliness or depression.

Outdoor gardening also has numerous health benefits. Working in the garden digging and pulling weeds is a workout, and while it not only burns calories, it is good for your heart. It also increases your hand strength. Keeping your hands as strong as possible can help you stay independent for a longer period of time. Gardening outside can also give you that much needed dose of vitamin D. We need that sunlight after being inside all winter long. Vitamin D increases your calcium levels, and increased calcium levels mean increased bone strength.

Staying mentally and physically strong are important for leading a long and healthy life. At Valley View Village, we have a gardening club that not only helps keep our community beautiful but helps encourage our members to stay active and young. ■

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.

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# THE IMPORTANCE of business sponsorships

The season of chamber events is upon us once again. It's that time of year when local businesses come together to network, learn and celebrate community spirit. But what makes these events truly shine? The answer lies in the invaluable support of business sponsorships.



Picture this: a room filled with entrepreneurs, small business owners and community leaders exchanging ideas, forging connections and sparking innovation. That's the magic of chamber events. From informative workshops and networking mixers to annual dinners, golf outings and community festivals, these gatherings offer something for everyone.

Yet, behind the scenes, there's a team working tirelessly to bring these events to life. That's where business sponsorships step in as the unsung heroes. Without the generous support of local businesses, many of these events simply wouldn't be possible. But why are sponsorships so crucial?

For starters, sponsoring a chamber event is like hitting the jackpot in terms of visibility. It's a great opportunity for businesses to showcase their brand in front of a captive audience of potential customers, partners and influencers. Whether it's through logo placement, shout-outs during speeches, or social media shout-outs, sponsors get to bask in the limelight.

But it's not just about exposure; it's also about building relationships. Chamber events provide unparalleled networking opportunities where businesses can forge valuable connections, exchange ideas and cultivate relationships that may translate into future collaborations, referrals or partnerships.

And let's not forget the warm fuzzy feeling that comes with giving back. By sponsoring chamber events, businesses demonstrate their commitment to the community. It's a way of saying, "Hey, we're here, and we care." Plus, it's a fantastic morale booster for employees who get to see their company making a positive impact beyond the bottom line.

But perhaps the most compelling reason to sponsor a chamber event is the ripple effect it creates. By investing in these gatherings, businesses help fuel the local economy, drive innovation and foster a sense of belonging. It's a win-win for everyone involved.

So, as chamber event season kicks into high gear, I encourage you to think about picking up a last-minute sponsorship for your business, because when businesses and communities come together, amazing things happen. ■

Information provided by Alyssa Knudsen, 2024 Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce President and owner of Altar Stationery.

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# WOMEN of Vision

The Women of Vision Luncheon topic was “Build Better Habits, Practical Health Tips for Busy Women” with presentations by Dr. Kari Swain, Dr. Lacey Dettmering, Dr. Amy Jensen, Jen Alexander PharmD and Nikki Barkhaus FDNP, NR.



Dr. Amy Jensen and Jen Alexander



Nikki Barkhaus, Johanna Hayes and Suzanne Friedrichson



Melissa Horton and Kennedy Horton



Alex Radzville and Dr. Lacey Dettmering



Angela Jones and Robin Bartalos



Loral Rainey, Nikki Barkhaus and Pennie Carroll



Dr. Kari Swain, Gretchen Proksa and Kristin Goodwin



# OUT & ABOUT



Tammy Main and Liv Wendt at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Emily McLain at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Nathan Anenson and Tammy Jones Christensen at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Loral Rainey, Mary Simon and Elizabeth Ellrich at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Gina Vitiritto and guest speaker Joseph Johnson, founder/CEO of Change Course at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Jon Yesulis at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Doug Schulte and Laura Meeker at Perk Before Work, held at GreenState Credit Union on May 7.



Bradford Johnson and speaker Joseph Johnson, founder/CEO of Change Course at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Nathan Anenson and Chris Barr at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce's Spring Power Lunch May 9 at Terrace Hills Golf Course.



Stephanie Caceres and Paul TeKippe at Perk Before Work, held at GreenState Credit Union on May 7.



Courtney Clark, Karen Yerena and Abby Brown at Perk Before Work, held at GreenState Credit Union on May 7.



Pennie Carroll and Charlotte DePew at Perk Before Work, held at GreenState Credit Union on May 7.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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\*\*EPA-estimated rating of 30 city/31 hwy/30 combined mpg. 2.0L GTDi PHEV engine/CVT Auto Transmission Power Shift Electric transmission/AWD drivetrain. Actual mileage will vary.



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