

ALTOONA

JUNE 2024

Living MAGAZINE Curtain Call

Residents share their experiences
on stage

Unified basketball team plays its first season

Amundson says cooperative the best choice for her

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WELCOME

FOUR reasons to participate in community theatre

Have you thought about getting involved in community theatre? If you want to participate, organizers will surely find a place for you. But what's in it for you personally? How about...

1. You can develop your creative talents.

Community theatre provides a supportive environment for people to explore their creative abilities. Whether you enjoy acting, singing, dancing or working behind the scenes, community theatre has opportunities for you to develop your skills and grow as an artist.

2. You can build confidence and self-esteem. Performing in front of an audience can be nerve-wracking, but it can also be empowering. Participating in community theatre can help build confidence and self-esteem while learning to overcome fears and take risks. Through rehearsals, performances and feedback from peers and mentors, performers gain a sense of pride and accomplishment that carries over into all areas of their lives.

3. You can develop important life skills at any age. Community theatre is more than just a hobby; it is also an opportunity to develop life skills. From time management and teamwork to problem-solving and communication, the skills that performers learn through theatre can help them succeed in many aspects of life. In addition, community theatre provides a sense of belonging that is often difficult to find elsewhere. Performers build lasting friendships with their peers and develop connections with mentors and volunteers who share their passion for the arts.

4. You can make a difference in your community. The arts have the power to bring people together and make a positive impact in the community. By participating in productions, people have the opportunity to inspire, entertain and educate audiences of all ages. Community theatre programs strive to make the arts accessible to all people in the community, regardless of background or financial resources.

Are you inspired enough now to want to get involved? You can start by reading this month's cover story. Then take the leap and reach out to organizers and say, "How can I get started?" You will be glad you did.

Thanks for reading. ■

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Curtain Call

Residents share their experiences on stage

By Chantel Boyd

For many people, public speaking is their worst fear. They recall suffering from butterflies in the stomach or worse before stepping out on the stage for their elementary school programs and the terror of having to speak in front of their peers in high school speech class. For them, the thought of performing before the public in a stage production sounds as appealing as being tarred and feathered. Others actually seek the spotlight, volunteering to memorize lines and create play props, eagerly awaiting the day the curtains are drawn back and the show begins. Some of these people share their reasons why center stage is the place they want to be.

Noah Sinclair has been involved in Class Act Productions, both on and off the stage.

Bringing theatre magic to children

Christine Amanda Yoder is on the board of directors at CAP Theatre of Altoona and also works with Theatre, Inc., Urbandale Community Theatre and Des Moines Young Artists Theatre (DMYAT).

"I have also volunteered at Ankeny Community Theatre, and I've seen shows around the metro," she says. "Before that, I was involved at Macon Little Theatre and Theatre Macon in Macon, Georgia."

Amanda has done a little of everything in theatre. When she was young, she liked to perform.

"As I age, I love to help the audience experience theatre magic. I got involved in community theatre when I was 15, and I've just never stopped," she says, adding that she enjoys much more than just performing.

"When you have a big, dramatic personality, people tell you to get involved in theatre, and it is some of that, but it's also the collaboration, the creativity and the community. You meet people who become your chosen family."

Amanda says she enjoys working with CAP Theatre because of her love of children.

"Working with children has been a joy I never expected to find," she says. "My own daughter became interested in theatre several years ago, and so I got involved at CAP."

Amanda and her daughter have found family with CAP, and that family has been a place of comfort and solace during difficult times.

"We've had some trying times in the last year — with the sudden death of my brother-in-law and the loss of Melissa Grooters, a longtime CAP volunteer and parent, to cancer. Watching these children comfort each other and the families support each other has been inspiring. This place is so much more than 'just' a theatre."

Amanda has been in so many productions, it is difficult to mention them all. Some were honored in the Cloris Awards competition. "Singin' in the Rain, JR." was a 2023 Cloris Award nominee for best production for youth and family, and "Matilda, JR." was a 2023 Cloris Award winner for best production for youth and family.

Amanda says she appreciates the transformative nature of acting.

"I love being someone totally different and



Christine Amanda Yoder is on the board of directors at CAP Theatre of Altoona and has been involved with a number of area community theatre groups.

fully immersing myself in the moment," she says, adding, "I can see myself bringing theatre magic to children for years to come."

Amanda encourages others to become involved in theatre, even if they are nervous.

"Do it! Remember that you aren't you onstage. Create your character, hide behind them if you must, but get out there."

Mentors have played an important role in her acting career, Amanda says.

"Jerry Mittlehauser, Carol Strandburg and Jim Crisp were omnipresent as I learned."

Highlights have been appearing onstage in an original musical by Chuck Levell with Grey Henson, who originated the role of Damian in "Mean Girls" on Broadway, and playing opposite F. Michael Haynie, currently performing the role of Glenn in "The Heart of Rock and Roll" on Broadway.

"Anyone who worked with them knew they were destined for bigger and better things, and that elevates your performance, too," she says.

One of Amanda's recent performances has been one of her favorites to date.

"The magic of 'Let it Go,' in our production of 'Frozen, JR.' — watching that moment happen and getting to watch the audience experience fills my bucket," she says.

Behind the scenes

Colt Hutchison of Altoona is only 10, but he has already had a career of sorts in theatre. His mother, Nikki Hutchison, couldn't be prouder of him for all he has already accomplished. Colt is involved in Class Act Productions behind the scenes working on the stage design and props.

"I am what they call stage crew," he says. "Prior to the show's production dates, I help with building props and backdrops. I set props during productions and act changes."

When Colt saw the enthusiasm other kids had for community theatre, he wanted in on the action.

"The first show I went to was 'Wizard of Oz Jr.' and, after seeing the other kids and how they were involved, it really made me want to be a part of it."

After seeing the first show, Colt dove head first into helping with productions.

"My first show I helped with was 'Musical Man Jr.' My second show is 'Frozen Jr.'"

Like many budding and seasoned actors, Colt likes the community he has found in theatre.

"I really like being involved with people that have similar interests to mine," he says. "I'm very creative, and this was a way for me to show my skills, make friends and feel like I'm part of something."

Colt dreams of being on stage with the other actors.

"Until now, I've only worked backstage, but I'm building the courage up and have been encouraged by my friends to try for an acting spot in a future production," he says. "I'm really excited about it — especially with my friends that I've made wanting me to do it."

Colt encourages others to be brave, too.

"I would tell others who want to act to not be afraid and to do what makes you happy. I would tell them that I promise that they would have fun," he says.

“When I completed my first show of ‘Music Man Jr.,’ it made me feel that I had finally completed something, and I had fun the whole time.”

— Colt Hutchison

Colt is grateful to his mom, Nicole, for introducing him to theatre.

“My mom took me to my first show and told me to try,” he says. “Once I joined, I met a girl named Nellie, and she has been my friend since. She encourages me to do it, even though she’s not in the show. She still roots for me.”

Colt is proud of his new hobby and how hard he has worked on his craft already.

“When I completed my first show of ‘Music Man Jr.,’ it made me feel that I had finally completed something, and I had fun the whole time.”



Colt Hutchison has been on the tech crew for “Music Man Jr.” and “Frozen Jr.” at CAP Theatre.

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A career in the making

Noah Sinclair, 13, is involved in Class Act Productions, both on and off the stage.

"I act on stage, and I also help with painting the set," he says.

Noah became interested in both acting and helping with the set because both seemed like a lot of fun.

"What interests me most about theatre is how much fun it is to develop the character you're playing and bring it to life," he says.

Like many actors, Noah enjoys the transformative process of playing a role.

"It's a great way to express yourself. And I really love the challenge," he says.

And he should know. So far, he has performed in CAP Theatre productions "Matilda Jr.," "Wizard of Oz Jr.," "Music Man Jr.," and, currently, "Frozen Jr." He is also rehearsing for "Antigone."

Noah started his acting journey with a few camps at the Des Moines Playhouse.

Noah's favorite thing about participating in theatre is that it brings him so much joy — not just the performing, but also doing it with

people he cares about in a place he loves.

"I love acting so much. I have made so many great friends at the theatre," he says. "It's my favorite place."

Noah has plans to continue to be in theatre.

"It's my life," he says. "I will be making it my career in one way or another."

Noah's advice for would-be actors is to lean on the community that can be found in theatre; they are glad to help, he says.

"There are so many nice people that will support you along the way. It's the greatest thing." He adds, "Even if you're afraid to get on stage, you just have to really go for it. Theatre begins at the end of your comfort zone."

The directors and producers at CAP Theatre, and the friends Noah has made at theatre and camp, have had an influence on his acting journey, he says.

"And my mom and dad are the most influential."

Noah's favorite memory is playing the Lion in "Wizard of Oz."

"He was a big personality to play, and I loved his sense of humor. That was a fun role."

Jeri, Noah's mother, is proud of him and his



Noah Sinclair has been involved in Class Act Productions, both on and off the stage.

participation in theatre and says that it helps build character.

"The arts are so important," she says. "These kids like Noah work so hard." ■



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SCRUMPTIOUS ways to simplify springtime meals

(Family Features) From everyday weeknight dinners to picnics in the park, warmer weather and longer days mean families want to spend more time together and less time in the kitchen. This spring, look for kitchen hacks that can make fresh and healthy weeknight seasonal recipes a cinch.

Skipping complicated prep work is the first step toward simplifying springtime meals. Rather than recipes that call for a lot of prep or cooking time, consider easy dishes that require only a handful of steps and use everyday ingredients you may already have in your pantry, fridge or freezer.

For example, these shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers with lemon and thyme can let you put a little spring in your weeknight dinners. Grilled skewers keep the whole family happy and come together in less than 30 minutes, making them perfect for quick and healthy meals without the hassle. The versatility of potatoes means you can grill them, and this version calls for a 5-minute microwave steam first to cut down on grill time.

To find more ways to savor springtime meals outdoors with your family, visit littlepotatoes.com. ■

Shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

- 1 pound bagged Little Potatoes
- 1 bunch broccoli
- 12 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 lemons, juice only
- 3 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In large, microwave-safe bowl, microwave potatoes on high 5 minutes.
- Chop broccoli into large pieces.
- Add broccoli and shrimp to bowl once potatoes are steamed.
- Add lemon juice, thyme and olive oil; evenly coat potatoes, shrimp and broccoli. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Build skewers and grill 10-15 minutes on medium-high heat, until shrimp is cooked through.



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INDEPENDENCE DAY

City Hall and offices, and the Altoona Library are closed for Independence Day on Thursday, July 4, 2024. The holiday will not impact garbage and yard waste pick-up for Altoona residents, and collection will happen on Monday and Tuesday of this week (July 1 and 2) as regularly scheduled.

FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

Celebrate Independence Day at the annual parade! The parade starts at 10 a.m. and travels along 8th Street starting at Venbury Dr and turns north to travel on 3rd Ave SE towards Haines Park. View the parade route at altoona-iowa.com.

FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVITIES AT HAINES PARK

Join the Altoona Historical Society and the Altoona Arts and Culture Commission for a family-friendly, Independence Day celebration at Haines Park immediately following the end of the annual parade.

Fun will include:

- The Altoona Historical Society's ice cream sundae social (freewill donation)
- The Haines Park splash pad will be open
- Live music on the Haines Park stage
- Inflatables for children to enjoy free, courtesy Altoona's Arts and Culture Commission
- Corn Hole (Bring your own bags)
- Haines Park playgrounds
- Food for purchase from food trucks

MASTER GARDENERS' 2024 TOUR

The Polk County Master Gardeners are hosting their annual garden tour, featuring 7 gardens across the metro area, including Altoona's Enabling Gardens. The Gardens will be open and staffed between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for the tour on Saturday, June 29.

Develop new landscape designs, get ideas that you can incorporate into your garden at home, or just enjoy taking in all the beauty the Polk County gardens have to offer. Tickets are \$10 for Adults and are available online at <https://go.state.edu/OXIWS8>.

PROTECTING AGAINST MOSQUITOS

City crews have been spraying for mosquitos since April, and will continue to do so across the community until October. 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. 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.



EASY living

Amundson says cooperative the best choice for her

Moving into the Vintage Cooperative of Altoona was the best choice Rhonda Amundson could have made for herself, she says.

She's not from the area — she previously lived in Arizona — but her daughter lives in State Center. So, Amundson relocated to the metro area to be closer to her and found that State Center is just about 45 minutes away from Altoona when you hop on Highway 65.

But Amundson didn't want a house that required lawn work anymore. She desired a place where she could live independently but be free of maintenance worries and chores.

She says she found just the place with the Vintage Cooperative of Altoona — an independent living environment for those 55 and older. This means Amundson owns her apartment but gets to avoid dealing with maintenance hassles.

She can also take advantage of amenities like a heated garage, fitness center, library, guest suite and more.

The facility also coordinates outings for its residents, which is a great way for everyone to get to know each other.

"We have a lot of camaraderie in the building, which I think is great for a senior," Amundson says.

She adds that a lot of residents in the building are widows and says it is especially important for them to get out and about.

There's even a social committee that plans things



When Rhonda Amundson decided to move to Iowa from Arizona to be closer to her daughter, she looked for a place where she could be independent but no longer worry about home and lawn maintenance.

like the annual holiday gathering and summer barbeques. Amundson herself is the BBQ master. She also enjoys the Friday evening get togethers which "may or may not involve wine."

This August marks two years since Amundson moved into the Vintage Cooperative of Altoona.

"I thought I'd make the choice while I was healthy and make the move," she says, adding she's enjoyed every minute of living in the cooperative.

"It's one of the best kept secrets of Altoona," she says. ■



BANK Iowa awards scholarships

Each year, Bank Iowa awards \$1,000 scholarships to commendable high school students across the state. This year's Spirit of Chandy scholarship award recipients totaled 17 seniors in Iowa high schools from as far west as Shenandoah to as far east as New Hampton. Locally, Felicity Faith Severs of Southeast Polk High School was honored. She plans to attend Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

The Spirit of Chandy scholarship honors Bank Iowa co-founder Harry Barr's daughter, Chandy Barr Clanton, who passed away in 2009. Students are selected based on academics, character, leadership, honors/awards received and participation in school and community activities, including swimming, biking, running and flying — activities Chandy was passionate about. ■

STAY alert for phone scams

With an increase in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and spoofing technology, phone scams are more sophisticated than ever. Staying educated on the different types of scams plays a crucial role in your ability to protect yourself against fraud.



Check out three of the most popular scams and how they work.

1. Fraud department imposter phone call scam. An individual receives a call seemingly from a phone number associated with their financial institution. The scammer works to gain credit or debit card numbers and PIN information.

- The caller/scammer will claim to be with their financial institution's fraud department.

- The scammer will ask the individual to verify a card transaction.

- When the individual confirms the transaction is unauthorized, the scammer will ask for the individual's full card number and PIN under the guise of shutting down the card to

prevent future unauthorized transactions.

- With the information, scammers create a counterfeit card to purchase gift cards or money orders using the individual's account.

2. Customer service imposter phone call scam. An individual receives a call from a scammer posing as a member of their financial institution's customer service team. The scammer works to gain access to the individual's online banking information to take over their account.

- The caller/scammer will claim to be with their financial institution's customer service department.

- The scammer will ask the individual to verify transactions on their account.

- When the customer confirms the transaction is unauthorized, the scammer will then ask for the customer's login information to verify additional transactions.

- Once scammers have access, they can login and set up external transfers to send money out of the account.

3. Malicious text message scam. An individual will receive a text from what appears to be their financial institution. The scammer works to get them to click on a link and then

enter their online banking information.

- The scammer will claim to be their financial institution verifying a transaction on the customer's account.

- Once the individual responds "No," they are sent a verification link asking them to enter their online banking login information.

- This link is malicious and sends the login credentials to another channel where it can be sold to other scammers.

- Scammers use the information to log in to the customer's online banking profile and set up external transactions.

If you've received a call like one above, hang up and call your local branch or customer service line using a number you already know or can find online. Your financial institution can then confirm if they did or did not call, review your account activity for any unauthorized transactions, and look for other suspicious activity. ■

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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NOT enough



One of the most common experiences in life is the feeling of not having enough or not being enough. Whether you are raising kids, managing a busy schedule, or navigating a difficult health issue, the reality of not having or being enough regularly hits us right between the eyes. We regularly announce that we don't have enough time, money, energy, confidence, patience, friends, opportunities or wisdom.

Usual responses to this feeling are either denial or despair. We can deny our inadequacies, minimizing our weaknesses and failures. Or we can despair, becoming overwhelmed by what we don't have or can't seem to get right. But there's another way. A better way.

Matthew, who was a firsthand witness to Jesus' ministry, wrote down what happened when Jesus was ministering to a large crowd (Matthew 14:13-21). It was getting late, and Jesus' disciples told him that he should send the crowd away so that they could get some food. A hungry crowd can be a "hangry" crowd. But Jesus told his disciples, "You give them something to eat." Their response: "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish." In other words, we don't have enough. Not even close.

This is where we find ourselves in this life again and again. We have a big challenge, and what we have in our hands is simply not enough. Not enough time. Not enough energy. Not enough courage.

Jesus tells his disciples, "Bring them here to me." In other words: what you have, put in my hands. That little bit, that's not enough, bring it to me.

The disciples had a choice: Will they trust Jesus and put what they have into His hands, or will they hold on tight to the little they have because they aren't sure what Jesus will do with it?

The disciples take a step of faith. Jesus takes the loaves and fish, gives thanks, and begins to distribute them among the 5,000 people. The result: Everyone is satisfied and there are 12 baskets of food left over. What was not enough in their hands was more than enough in Jesus' hands.

Look at the little in your hands — the little confidence, the little patience, the little hope, or whatever it is — and place it into Jesus' hands and see what he can do with it. With Jesus, you don't have to deny your weaknesses or despair that you don't have enough. Bring what you have to Him. Even bring your failures and regrets because he'll take those, too. By taking them into his hands — the hands that were nailed to a cross — he'll transform you with his forgiveness and grace. I invite you to see how Jesus can take your "not enough" and make it into more than enough. ■

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

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Bondurant-Farrar District Office
300 Garfield Street SW
Bondurant, IA 50035
Phone: 515-967-7819
Web: www.bfschools.org

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POLK COUNTY
Board of Supervisors



Polk County North/East Highlights

The Polk County Board of Supervisors are responsible for approving funding for numerous projects throughout the county. Funding of projects comes from gaming revenues generated with our partnership with Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino. The funds support Polk County Community Betterment Grants and Community Development Grants to enhance the quality of life throughout Polk County



Polk County Opens Athene North Shore at Easter Lake Park

In May, Polk County Conservation dedicated and opened the new Athene North Shore at Easter Lake Park. The redesigned and reimagined park is the most all-inclusive park in the United States. The new park features include: ADA accessible pontoon boat, quiet, de-escalation rooms for people with sensory input disorders, large beach mats to serve as accessible walkways over sand and extra-wide concrete paths for wheelchairs and walkers.

Learn more: PolkCountyIowa.gov/Conservation



Goodrell Elementary Unveils New Sensory Mural with Funding from Polk County

Goodrell Middle School introduced a new sensory mural and wellness room created by Jill Wells Art LLC + AXA Mentorship Program in collaboration with the B. WELL Foundation. This art and wellness space is the latest addition to Goodrell's counseling and mental health offerings. It is a student-inspired and student-invested project that provides a uniquely reflective experience during the day for students to de-stress and return to the classroom feeling less anxious and emotionally refreshed for continued learning.



Snow Tubing in July? Now You Can

Imagine the thrill of tubing down a giant hill with wind flying in your face -- in the middle of July! That imagined future is now a reality in Des Moines. Polk County Conservation has reopened Sleepy Hollow Sports Park which includes the largest all-season, turf-surface tubing hill in the United States. Now that the all-season tubing hill is up and running, Polk County Conservation's focus will shift to preparing for traditional snow-based recreation. Additionally, staff will be making decisions on remodeling the lodge facility, improving access, and expanding camping operations.



Polk County Central Iowa Source Water Research Study Underway

Our two rivers, the Raccoon and Des Moines, are one of our communities greatest assets with more than 240 miles of shoreline. These rivers play a significant role in central Iowa's local economy, culture, recreation community and overall identity. The rivers are the primary source of drinking water for over one-half million people. Right now, a two year study called the Central Iowa Source Water Research Assessment (C.I.S.W.R.A.) is underway to give us a better picture of what is in our water. A team of nationally renowned scientists are working to give us a comprehensive look at the cleanliness of our rivers and streams. Once complete in 2025, CISWRA will provide a road map for community leaders to create policies and best practices to cleaning our waterways and protecting this vital resource for future generations.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancelations.

WillowFest

July 3, 6 p.m. until fireworks
Willowbrook Elementary,
300 17th Ave. S.W., Altoona

Enjoy this free family event featuring
food trucks, games, vendors and fireworks.



All American Extravaganza

July 3, 3-10:30 p.m.
Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino,
1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona

Join the celebration, which culminates
with fireworks.

Fourth of July Parade

July 4, 10 a.m.
Eighth Street, Altoona

The Altoona Historical Society presents this
Fourth of July Parade.

Brightside Market

Thursday nights through Sept. 26,
5-8 p.m.

Brightside Aleworks,
480 Center Place, Altoona

Enjoy this farmers market with "grow it or
make it" vendors, food trucks, beer, music and
theme nights that are fun for the whole family.

Adventureland Fireworks

July 4, 9-10:30 p.m.
Adventureland Theme Park &
Resort

Top off your July 4th fun with the
fireworks at Adventureland Park.

Master Chef at The Enabling Garden

July 9, 6 p.m.
The Enabling Garden,
1050 First Ave. S., Altoona

Master Chef Grant Gillion
will be speaking at this event.



Citywide Garage Sales

July 11-13 and Aug. 1-3
Altoona

Enjoy bargain hunting at
garage sales around Altoona.

Music in the Park

July 28, 6 p.m.
Haines Park Outdoor Stage,
700 block of Third Ave. S.E., Altoona

Come to Haines Park on the last Sunday of each
month for free music in the park. CAP Theatre will be
selling popcorn and pop. Bring lawn chairs and blankets
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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 through the end of July. Find out more at altoonapubliclibrary.com.

ADULT PROGRAMMING – AGES 18 AND OLDER

- **Cricut 101, Wednesday, July 10 at 6 p.m.** Come learn how to create a fun project using the Cricut from the Maker Hub. Registration is required.
- **Insect Encounters, Wednesday, July 24 at 6 p.m.** Join Polk County ISU Extension and Outreach Natural Resources Program Coordinator Gina Buelow to learn more about the insects and other invertebrates you can find in your own backyard. We'll have live critters to observe and learn from, so be ready to have a fantastic insect encounter. Registration required.
- **Cardmaking, Wednesday, July 31 at 6 p.m.** Follow us step-by-step to make several unique, colorful greeting cards. All materials will be provided. Registration required.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

- **Stickerpalooza, Tuesday, July 23 at 4 p.m.** Everybody loves stickers. Let your creativity flow and discover a variety of ways to design your own stickers. Grades 3-6. Registration required.
- **Glow in the Dark Art, Wednesday, July 24 at 3 p.m.** We're

making art that glows in the dark. Join us and explore a variety of glow in the dark mediums. Grades Pre-K-6. Registration required.

- **Pipsqueak Playdate, Fridays from 10-11 a.m.** Come play and socialize at the library. We'll have toys and activities set up for your little one to explore. Ages 5 and younger. No registration required.

TEEN PROGRAMMING

- **Jelly Bean Taste Test, Monday, July 1, from 6-7 p.m.** Think you know your Jelly Belly flavors? Come taste an assortment of these colorful candies to test your skills — and maybe get beanboozled. Grades 6-12. No registration required.
- **Cupcake Wars, Wednesday, July 17, from 2-3:30 p.m.** Get ready to battle...with frosting. We'll bring the cupcakes and frosting; you bring the creativity to create cupcake masterpieces individually or as a team. Grades 6-12. Registration required.
- **Painting Telephone, Monday, July 29, from 6-7 p.m.** It's a game of telephone, but with paintbrushes. Paint for 10 minutes, then pass the painting along for others to add to it. See what collaborative creations we can come up with, and take home your original painting at the end. Grades 6-12. No registration required.

To find a complete list of events and to register, visit our website at altoonapubliclibrary.com. Click on the Upcoming Events tab. ■



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UNIFIED basketball team plays its first season



The Southeast Polk Unified Basketball team

With the help of the Ankeny Centennial Unified high school coach, Special Olympics and Southeast Polk High School administration and coaches, the Southeast Polk High School Unified Basketball team played in its first season last school year.

The unified team had 14 participants and four contests during the winter basketball season. They played during halftime of a Southeast Polk boys varsity game, halftime of an Ankeny Centennial girls varsity game, halftime at the girls state basketball tournament and halftime at the boys state basketball tournament.

"Seeing this kind of inclusivity and the positive social interactions between teammates is extremely rewarding. Unified Basketball provides a fun and encouraging atmosphere where everyone feels valued," Southeast Polk High School educator Kaeli Humphrey says.

According to the Special Olympics website, the concept of unified sports is to provide the opportunity for people with and without intellectual disabilities to play together on the same team. This provides a quick path to friendship and understanding.

"It got me involved in basketball and with different people. I loved playing basketball with my friends. I liked being there and helping our team," Southeast Polk student Jacob Dodson says.

Unified activities have also provided the Southeast Polk athletes, school and community the opportunity to promote inclusion, awareness, understanding and friendship. Playing on the team has provided opportunities for students to develop social interaction skills, communication and teamwork.

"Being a part of the team and seeing and helping our unified athletes brought me so much joy. It was a cool experience to see how much fun others had being involved in unified sports," Southeast Polk student Spencer Olesen says.

The Southeast Polk High School currently offers opportunities in unified basketball, unified track, unified dance, Best Buddies and Best Buddies Unified Kickball. Going forward, the school hopes to be able to provide more unified opportunities for student athletes. They would like to add Unified Bowling, Unified Bocce or Unified Cornhole. They also hope to schedule more Unified Basketball games next season.

"I love watching our kids participate with RAM PRIDE, kindness and compassion. It makes your heart smile," Southeast Polk High School Educator Tia Stiles says. ■

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HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

THC infused beverages

CBD and THC, two compounds derived from the cannabis plant, have been enjoying a meteoric rise in popularity in recent years — and for good reason. As societal attitudes toward cannabis shift and scientific research progresses, more people are turning to these substances for their health benefits and therapeutic effects.



One of the primary reasons people love CBD and THC is their ability to provide relaxation and stress relief without the negative side effects often associated with alcohol consumption. Unlike alcohol, which can lead to hangovers and numerous health issues, CBD and THC offer a gentle, more natural way to relax and unwind.

CBD in particular has gained recognition for its health benefits, ranging from pain relief to anxiety reduction. Many users experience a sense of calm and wellbeing after consuming CBD products, making them an appealing alternative to pharmaceuticals.

CBD and THC are also becoming increasingly accessible. Local hemp stores carry a wide assortment of CBD and THC-infused drinks, ranging from zero THC to 10 milligrams of THC.

In Iowa, as cannabis laws tighten, THC beverages will remain legal, distinguishing them from many other hemp-derived products that will become illegal starting July 1. This guarantees continued access to the benefits of CBD and THC without legal concerns for consumers. ■

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.

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HEALTH

By Nikki Morgan

SUMMER skin care tips

As temperatures heat up and summer officially arrives, you might notice some changes in your skin's needs. The sun's harmful rays and heat can wreak havoc on our skin, predisposing it to premature aging and skin cancer. Here are some summer skincare tips to keep your skin feeling and looking healthy and radiant.



- Use sunscreen.** Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Make sure to reapply every two hours, especially if you are swimming or sweating. Ditch your heavy foundation for a tinted sunscreen to avoid clogged pores.
- Stay hydrated.** It is important to drink plenty of water during the hot summer months to help keep the skin hydrated and plump. Dehydration can cause dryness, irritation and excess oil production.
- Add an antioxidant to your skincare routine.** Adding an antioxidant, such as Vitamin C, not only helps with fine lines and wrinkles, but also brightens your skin, improves skin tone and texture, and protects against other environmental factors and long-term sun damage.
- Eat a healthy diet.** Eating fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants can keep your skin looking healthy and protect from damage the sun is causing.
- Get a facial.** Get a cooling and exfoliating facial to reduce dead skin build-up, unclog pores, and facilitate lymphatic drainage to detoxify and reduce inflammation. Talk to your esthetician for additional recommendations on services and products that are safe in the summer. ■

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

PLAN AHEAD

By Buffy Peters

GRIEF 101 with Buffy: Get physical

Grief is the natural and normal reaction we have after someone has died. One fact that some people are not aware of is that we experience grief within our bodies, so finding ways to physically release it is a great way to express some of our most intense emotions.

What physical activities do you enjoy?

Do you prefer being in nature? Go for a walk or run on a trail. Gardening is also a great way to be active outside.

Do you enjoy dancing? Take a class (online or in-person), or put on some tunes and dance in your home.

Do you want to take it easy on your joints? Try swimming, water aerobics, chair yoga, or stretch classes.

Do you feel limited with time or other resources? Cleaning, cooking, and other household chores keep us moving.

Do you feel worried about where to start? No worries. Many fitness organizations have variety of classes dedicated to specific age groups and levels.

There are so many different ways we can move in the world. Think about what you enjoy or pick a new activity to try. Movement helps us burn energy, release feelings, and increase our sense of control in the world. Make a list of some activities you would like to try and then start getting physical. ■

Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666.



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There is very little that can take away the pain when someone we love dies. However, the emotional stress that often accompanies a death can be lessened by Advanced Planning before the need arises.

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HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich

PROPER functional movement during

It is absolutely possible to create a comfortable pregnancy, easy birth and smooth postnatal recovery. The choices you make and habits you form will influence your pregnancy and birth. Pregnancy isn't always going to be easy. Studies show that the energy expenditure of pregnancy is comparable to running a 40-week marathon. Your body is working hard growing a human being, so start by giving yourself grace and tune in to connect more deeply with your body.

Take notice of your functional movement. Daily movement habits make a large impact on the way you feel during pregnancy. Daily walking, stretching and yoga are all important to incorporate, but it is also important to look at how you're moving throughout the day during your normal activities. Activities to consider are how you are getting out of a chair, how you are bending over to do things like pick up toys or load the dishwasher, how are you carrying heavy items or other children, and what your posture is while sitting. Learning the proper techniques for functional movement as your body changes will help to avoid pain or discomfort.

Spinal movement and pelvic positioning also play a significant role in pregnancy comfort and ease of birth. Physical harmony is critical for the end goal of birthing, as gently as possible, a healthy baby. A prenatal chiropractor certified in Webster Technique will focus on creating alignment in the pelvis. Utilizing the Webster Technique, space is created for the baby to grow and move freely. This space allows for the baby to move into optimal birthing position. Women who receive prenatal care using the Webster Technique have been shown to benefit from chiropractic care by experiencing shorter labor times and decreased labor pain intensity. ■

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

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MISSING cat

Cali has been missing since May 6, right before the tornadoes and storms rolled through the Altoona area. She is a mostly all white, 7-year-old female cat with some calico on her head and bridge of her nose. She has some orange near the base of her tail and an all gray tabby-like tail. She was a rescue so she may be comfortable outdoors, though she has been only an indoor cat for the last six years. With all the sirens, lightning and thunder, wind, pounding rain, etc. that entire week, she may have been frightened and moved further away than one would anticipate. If you have seen her, please call 515-710-2877. ■



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



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CELEBRATING certified nursing assistants

June 13-19 is the week we set aside to celebrate one of the most undervalued careers out there: the certified nursing assistants (CNAs). There are more than 1.5 million CNAs currently working in the United States, and there is a projected 17% growth over the next 10 years, and, honestly, we will still need more people in this field.



A certified nursing assistant helps patients with direct care needs, such as assisting patients in using the restroom, bathing, grooming tasks such as brushing teeth and hair or shaving, taking vitals, answering call lights and so much more. CNAs work in hospitals, skilled and long-term care senior residences, home care agencies and adult day centers. They are an invaluable part of the healthcare team.

An average day for a CNA means arriving for their shift and hitting the ground running. They typically begin by doing rounds to get updated on all their clients from the previous care team. Then it's time to start getting everyone ready for their day. This entails going to each room to offer individualized care, always treating them with value, dignity and respect. They may help clients get to the restroom, help them get dressed, assist with grooming tasks, and then transport them to the dining room for breakfast. As they sit in the dining room to assist those who need help eating, another person may have to use the restroom or someone who maybe wanted to sleep in would now like to get up for the day. This calls for flexibility and, oftentimes, lots of multitasking. Once dining is done, they will assist people back to their rooms and assist them in transferring to their chair or bed or perhaps an activity. Their free moments are often spent charting and documenting all of the assistance they have provided. Most importantly, they do their work with patience, kindness, an open ear and commitment.

CNAs are busy, and they work so very hard. How do you show your thanks to such a needed and pivotal role in the health care of others? Simply say "thank you," be kind, and tell them how much of a difference they are making in the lives of those they care for. You can also let their supervisor know what an amazing job they do. We love to hear about the special moments you see firsthand when visiting your loved one.

The theme for this year's CNA week is, "Kindness in Action." CNAs spend more face-to-face time with patients than any other position. We are so thankful for the kindness you show each day. You are appreciated. Thank you for making a difference every day. ■

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

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*Success Through
Synergy*

CHAMBER seeks feedback from businesses

In the ever-shifting landscape of business, change is the only constant. From technological advancements to evolving consumer preferences, staying ahead of the curve is crucial for survival. In these dynamic times, the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce stands as a cornerstone of support for businesses, offering resources, advocacy and a sense of community. But, in the face of rapid change, what do businesses truly want from their Chamber of Commerce?



As entrepreneurs, small business owners and industry leaders, your input is invaluable. What challenges are you facing in adapting to the changing business environment? Is it navigating the complexities of digital marketing? Keeping up with shifting regulations? Or perhaps finding innovative ways to attract and retain talent in a competitive market?

The Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce is here to support you through these transitions, but we need your feedback to better understand your needs. How can the Chamber provide more effective resources and guidance to help you thrive in today's business landscape? What initiatives or programs would you like to see implemented to address the challenges you're encountering?

Your feedback is essential in shaping the Chamber's strategy for the future. By working together and sharing insights, we can ensure that the Chamber remains a valuable ally in your journey towards success. So, we invite you to share your thoughts, suggestions and ideas on how the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce can better support you in these changing times.

In conclusion, the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of adapting to meet the evolving needs of local businesses. Your feedback is instrumental in guiding our efforts to provide relevant and impactful support. Together, let's navigate the waves of change and emerge stronger than ever before. We eagerly await your input as we continue to strengthen our commitment to serving the business community. ■

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



Mike Poirier and Chuck Lee at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



Kyle Kocak, Tyler Blocker and Alyssa Marzen at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



Ted Pietrzak, Mike Leep, Sr. and Mike Poirier at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



Scott Duer, Randy Pierce and Jared Ogbourne at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



Juan R., David S., Missy H., Josh C. and Brandon P. at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



David S., Jahmal I., Shane S. and Luis C. at the ribbon cutting and grand opening at Honda Altoona June 4.



A ribbon cutting was held, and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich was welcomed, at Swain Chiropractic on May 15.



Kyle Lee, Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich and Dr. Kari Swain at the ribbon cutting and welcoming reception at Swain Chiropractic May 15.



Loral Rainey, Kalie Fields and Scott Hoffman at the ribbon cutting and welcoming reception at Swain Chiropractic May 15.



Kristin James, Amy Jensen and Nikki Barkhaus at the ribbon cutting and welcoming reception at Swain Chiropractic May 15.



Sheila Lancaster and Lori Slings at the ribbon cutting and welcoming reception at Swain Chiropractic May 15.

OUT & ABOUT



Jaci Robson and Pearl Doty at the East Polk Regional After Hours held in Altoona on May 22.



Jolene Goodman and Ben Fuller at the East Polk Regional After Hours held in Altoona on May 22.



Twila Shreves, Rick Kroeger and Tim Guter at Noon Networking at Pizza Ranch in Altoona on May 21.



Tammy Main and Michael Demoss at Noon Networking at Pizza Ranch in Altoona on May 21.



Gracie Ewen, Stacey St. Ores and Abbi Wolfkill at Noon Networking at Pizza Ranch in Altoona on May 21.



Randy Bowlby and Stockton Harter at Noon Networking at Pizza Ranch in Altoona on May 21.



Emily Jaeger and Chris O'Hern at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



Chad Quick and Pennie Carroll at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



Laura Meeker and Karen Yerena at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



Lori Baldwin and Kyle Lee at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



Ethan Hafner and Mark Vander Tuig at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



Tim Guter and Rick Kroeger at Perk Before Work at Pennie Carroll & Associates Real Estate, Altoona, June 4.



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