

ALTOONA

JANUARY 2023

Living

MAGAZINE

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

East Polk County residents
share their favorites

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OUT AND ABOUT**

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EDUCATION**

**Feta roasted salmon and tomatoes
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WELCOME

RESIDENTS choose again

Welcome to our annual compilation of residents' choices in Eastern Polk County. We launched this poll to determine the top people, places and events in the area, and the results make for a fun read each year.

We invite residents in the area to vote for their favorites by answering more than 60 questions with open-ended responses. Some other polls rig the results by "suggesting" choices of businesses or requiring them to pay to be on the ballot. That is unethical, in our eyes, as it doesn't give a true snapshot of what the locals really like. Rest assured, these results are 100% organic responses that we received from our online and mail-in ballots.

We have become quite good at polling our readers and sharing results. I have been gathering this type of information for CITYVIEW magazine for many years, and you are likely familiar with the Best Of Des Moines readers' poll and the certificates you see across central Iowa. That poll was the first of its kind in the metro area, and it continues to be the primary source of central Iowans' favorites. Now we know it not only works for Des Moines, but for Eastern Polk County as well.

You will likely agree with many of the results, and you will likely disagree with some, too. Hopefully, you took the time to cast your vote. If not, be sure to do so next year. Look to the pages of this magazine for full details as the time draws nearer.

We published the top three vote-getters in each of the categories inside these pages. Be sure to congratulate all the people, places and events that were selected as winners and let them know how much you appreciate them being in Eastern Polk County.

As always, thank you for reading, and thank you for voting, too. ■



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A man and a woman are standing in front of a stone fireplace. The man is on the right, wearing a grey baseball cap with 'Eagle Homes' on it, a white and grey striped polo shirt, and blue jeans. The woman is on the left, wearing a white and grey jacket over a black top and dark pants. They are both smiling. The background is a stone fireplace with a dark mantel.

FEATURE

Eagle Homes of Iowa, owned by Eric and Kayla Vanderploeg, was residents' choice for favorite home builder.

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Eastern Polk County residents share their favorites

By Tammy Pearson

The tradition continues: Eastern Polk County residents were again asked to choose their “favorites” in the annual Residents’ Choice Poll. And, once again, they identified their favorite auto repair place, favorite dentist, favorite place to take your mom and dad, favorite financial planner, favorite preschool — and the list goes on. The poll has closed, and it’s time to announce the “winners.”

Altoona residents will find many of their hometown favorites among this year’s winners. Caring Hands is the favorite

nonprofit organization. The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge landed at the top of the restaurant category, and, when residents chose their favorite place to buy a present for a woman, they gave the nod to SkinFusion FX.

These “favorites” were chosen by the residents of Eastern Polk County, and now that we’ve done this annual poll a few times, we see that some winners keep returning. They have mastered providing quality service, care and products — and winning over the loyalty of their customers. Others

come and go. New businesses appear. You are likely to agree with some choices and disagree with others, but the results were determined by your area neighbors. If you voted in this year’s poll, thank you for participating. And, if you didn’t, be sure to look for notices in this magazine of next year’s poll opening and cast your vote!

With some categories having only a few votes between the top vote-getter and the third-place vote-getter, it’s important to remember that all those listed are winners, and we congratulate them all.

FEATURE

Eastern Polk County residents share their favorites...

(Runners up in alphabetical order)

Consignment store

Caring Hands

Runners up: Many Hands Thrift Market; Stuff Etc

Mom/child date spot

Great Escape - The Ultimate Experience

Runners up: Somewhere in the Middle Coffee Shop; The Nail Boutique

Dad/child date spot

Great Escape - The Ultimate Experience

Runners up: Cinemark Altoona and XD; Sweet Swirls Rolled Ice Cream

Coach

Zach Pfantz

Runners up: Ben Anderson; Brad Zelenovich

Bank

VisionBank

Runners up: Bankers Trust; Community Choice Credit Union

Restaurant

The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge

Runners up: Brick Street Market and Café; Johnny's Italian Steakhouse

Hair salon

Style by Desiree

Runners up: Hypsie Salon; Signature Salon & Day Spa

Gymnastics/tumbling studio

Pat Barton Dance Studio

Runners up: Becky's Dance & Tumbling Studio; Triad Gymnastics

Doctor

Dr. Laura Francisco

Runners up: Dr. Matthew Nicholson; Dr. Ashley Taliaferro

Dentist

Dr. Steven Neville

Runners up: Dr. Corbin Brady; Dr. Steven Fuller

Chiropractor

Dr. Marcus Dawson

Runners up: Dr. Rocky Reeves; Dr. Kari Swain

Eye doctor

Dr. Amanda Korth

Runners up: Dr. Kenneth Hansen; Dr. Sheri Matthaidess

Heating and cooling contractor

Metro Heating & Cooling

Runners up: Schaal Plumbing, Heating & Cooling; Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

Pastor

Glen Hanson

Runners up: Trevor Pinegar; Greg Pollak

Health club or gym

BrickHouse Fitness

Runners up: Altoona Campus; Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping

School

Morris Elementary

Runners up: Clay Elementary; Southeast Polk High School

Boutique

Little House on Main

Runners up: Clark Candle Co. & Market; Empress Threads Boutique

Park

Thomas Mitchell Park

Runners up: Doanes Park; Village Park

Place for a field trip

Thomas Mitchell Park

Runners up: CAP Theatre; Lake Petocka

Community festival

Bondurant Summerfest

Runners up: Altoona Palooza; Bondurant Battle of the Bands



Teacher

Jody Person

Runners up: Rachel Davenport; Cailey Schlenker

Principal

Ben Anderson

Runners up: Nathan Ballagh; Erik Garnass

Church

Cross Point Family Church of Bondurant

Runners up: Lutheran Church of the Cross; Ss. John & Paul Catholic Church

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FEATURE

Restaurant for dessert

Home Slice Handmade Pies

Runners up: Over the Top; Sweet Swirls Rolled Ice Cream

Restaurant for breakfast

Somewhere in the Middle Coffee Shop

Runners up: Brick Street Market & Cafe; Perkins Restaurant and Bakery

Restaurant for lunch

Brick Street Market & Cafe

Runners up: Los Altos Mexican Restaurant; Sugar Shack Diner

Restaurant for dinner

The Big Steer Restaurant & Lounge

Runners up: Johnny's Italian Steakhouse; Los Altos Mexican Restaurant

Car dealership

A3 Auto

Runners up: Deery Brothers Chevrolet; Martinson's Used Cars

Place for ice cream

Over the Top

Runners up: DQ Grill & Chill; Sweet Swirls Rolled Ice Cream

Event

Iowa State Fair

Runners up: Altoona Palooza; Southeast Polk Homecoming Parade

Daycare

The Bird's Nest

Runners up: Bloom Early Learning Center; Shining Stars Day Care

Children's birthday party spot

Great Escape - The Ultimate Experience

Runners up: Altoona Campus; BrickHouse Fitness

Preschool

Bondurant Christian Church Preschool

Runners up: Adventure-Life Preschool; Church of the Cross Preschool



Residents' choice for favorite restaurant for dinner was The Big Steer Restaurant & Lounge. Bryan Fix is the dining room manager.

Library

Bondurant Community Library

Runners up: Altoona Public Library; Pleasant Hill Public Library

Chamber of commerce

Bondurant Chamber of Commerce

Runners up: Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce; Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce

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Favorite Eastern Polk County place to purchase a gift:
for a woman (Get Place)
for a man (runner-up)

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FEATURE

Camping spot

Yellow Banks Park

Runners up: Griff's Valley View RV Park & Campground; Thomas Mitchell Park

Nonprofit

Caring Hands

Runners up: Bondurant Community Foundation; Mary Bump Memorial Foundation

Dance studio

Pat Barton Dance Studio

Runners up: Becky's Dance & Tumbling Studio; Kasey Leigh Dance Studio

Place to take your mom and dad

Cinemark Altoona and XD

Runners up: Great Escape - The Ultimate Experience; Los Altos Mexican Restaurant

Place to take your kids or grandkids

Adventureland Resort

Runners up: Altoona Aquatics Park; Great Escape - The Ultimate Experience

Place for auto service

Williamson's Repair & Tire

Runners up: McManus Automotive; Ted's Body Shop

Place to purchase a gift for a woman

SkinFusion FX

Runners up: Little House on Main; Suzy's Kitchen & Gifts

Place to purchase a gift for a man

Bass Pro Shops

Runners up: SkinFusion FX; Suzy's Kitchen & Gifts

Realtor

Heather Rawlins

Runners up: Pennie Carroll; Sheena Cochran-Foster

Bar

Reclaimed Rails Brewing Company

Runners up: Fireside Grille; Hawk Heaven Tavern



Miriam Cody, director of operations, and Melanie Carlson, store manager, Caring Hands, favorite consignment store and nonprofit organization.

Place for guests to stay

Prairie Meadows Hotel

Runners up: Adventureland Inn; Hampton Inn

Coffee shop

Somewhere in the Middle Coffee Shop

Runners up: Scooter's Coffee; Starbucks Coffee Company

TWO PAWS UP!

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NOMINATION

**Favorite Eastern Polk County
Veterinarian**

Winner: Dr. Renee Conley
Runner-Up: Dr. Stephanie Timm

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FEATURE

Nursery or landscaping company

Lucille's Garden Center

Runners up: Frontline Lawn & Landscape;
Snyder Landscaping and Lawn Care

CPA

Nick Stanley

Runners up: Dave Duggan; Donald Timmins

Insurance Agent

Tim Forbes

Runners up: Mark Densmore; Luke Peterson

Home builder

Eagle Homes

Runners up: Berkey Home Builders; Shaymus
Smith Construction

Pharmacy

Medicap

Runners up: CVS; Walgreens

Grocery store

Fareway

Runners up: Hy-Vee; Aldi

Senior living facility

Prairie Vista Village

Runners up: Courtyard Estates;
Valley View Village

Home improvement business

Shaymus Smith Construction

Runners up: Menards; Lowe's

Veterinarian

Dr. Renee Conley

Runners up: Dr. Stephanie
Timm; Dr. Bill Williams

Physical therapist

Dr. Leslie Foley Brant

Runners up: Dr. Hailey Huey;
Dr. Amy Jensen

Dog groomer

Tangled Tails

Runners up: Barks & Wags;
Doggie Stylez

Attorney

R. Bradley Skinner

Runners up: Nicholas Bailey; Susan Ugolini

Financial planner

Adam Kline

Runners up: Chris Schonridge; Luke Sibley ■



Nikki Morgan at Skin Fusion FX, residents' choice for favorite place to buy a gift for a woman.



Thank you for voting!



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HOSPICE services help ensure quality of life

When his wife's doctor suggested it was time for her to receive hospice services, Paul C. of West Des Moines found himself feeling angry.

"I thought it meant she was at death's door," he recalls. "But her doctor encouraged me to do my homework, and, after learning more, I became more open to the concept of home hospice care. My wife was discharged from the hospital and came home, and the nurses came a couple times a week."

The decision ended up being the best one for the family, Paul says. "She was more comfortable and more relaxed, and her pain was controlled. She had some really good days — active ones, even — and we were able to make some memories that are very comforting to me now."

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

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

But no matter the type of services you're considering, you should



always ask any provider on your list: "How can you help me or my loved one continue to live through this stage of life?"

Ideally, hospice services should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice services, enabling an individual to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months or longer that remain in his or her life. And the earlier hospice services are started, the more they can benefit the person who is ill as well as the whole family.





"We didn't know, for example, that once my wife went on hospice, we would get a hospital bed brought to the house and that she would receive music therapy and pet therapy and all kinds of things she really enjoyed and that really relaxed her," Paul says. "Before that, we were having a hard time managing the pain from her cancer, and she was really agitated. The pain control was a really big deal."

So, as we all wind down from the holidays, give some thought to what the coming months look like for you and your family. If you decide it might be time for some help, know that making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult — but once you've taken that first step, having care in place can make your loved one's last weeks and months more relaxed and meaningful for all. ■

Ward Phillips is vice president of market strategy and business development for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice services, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

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“When my wife’s doctors suggested hospice, I was angry. I thought it meant she was at death’s door. After learning more, though, I became more open to it — and it ended up being the best thing for her and for our family. She was more comfortable and more relaxed, and we were able to make some memories that are very comforting to me now.”

— Paul C., West Des Moines

WesleyLife Hospice helps people spend their days the way they want to, continuing to make memories with those closest to them in the environment that they find most comfortable. We offer care anywhere, and virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify. What’s more, as everyone processes end-of-life issues differently, **we offer support for the whole family.**



If you’d like to know more about hospice services for someone you love, visit wesleylife.org/hospice or call **(515) 978-2777**. We’d be honored to help your family.

SHOULD you consider tax-loss harvesting?

Stock market losses can be rough on your portfolio's bottom line, but they may also offer the potential to reduce your tax liability and possibly buy shares at a discount. Whether this strategy — called tax-loss harvesting — is appropriate for you depends on a variety of factors, including your current portfolio performance, your long-term goals, and your current and future taxable income.



one year and short term if it was held for one year or less. Long-term gains are taxed at a rate of 0%, 15% or 20% depending on your income. Short-term gains are taxed at your ordinary income tax rate, which may be much higher than your capital gains rate.

For tax purposes, capital losses are applied first to like capital gains and then to the other types of gains; for example, long-term losses are applied first to long-term gains and then to short-term gains. Up to \$3,000 of any remaining losses can be applied to your ordinary income for the current year (\$1,500 if you are married filing separately). Finally, any remaining losses can be carried over to be applied to capital gains or ordinary income in future years. For most taxpayers, the biggest benefit comes when applying losses to short-term gains or ordinary income.

Selling, burying and washing

Some investors sell losing investments with the idea of harvesting the tax loss and then buying the same investment while its price remains low. In order to discourage this, the IRS has a wash-

sale rule, which prohibits buying "substantially identical stock or securities" within 30 days prior to or after a sale. This also applies to securities purchased by your spouse or a company you own.

It is impossible to time the market, but under the right circumstances, harvesting a tax loss and then buying the same security at least 30 days later (i.e., after the wash sale period expires) could potentially result in a lower tax liability when you sell that security later at a gain. This is most likely if you repurchase the security at a similar or lower price, and you are in a higher tax bracket at the time you take the loss than at the time you take the gain.

Tax-loss harvesting is a complex strategy, and it would be wise to consult your financial professional before taking action. ■

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ALTOONA Public Library news

Adult programming

• **Adult Splat Studio**, Fridays, Feb. 3, March 3 and April 7 from 6-8 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. No cost to attend, but space is limited. For ages 18-plus. Registration required.

• **Cardmaking**, Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. Come make your own personalized greeting cards. We'll provide the templates, materials and step-by-step instructions for you to make several cards. For ages 18-plus. Registration required.

• **Retirement University, three-session course**, Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Getting ready to retire? Join Ryan Biniak from the Society of Financial Awareness (SOFA) as he breaks down everything you need to know to start planning. Registration required for each session.

Feb. 21: Medicare and Social Security

Feb. 28: Investment & Taxes

March 6: Estate Planning & Long-term Care

• **Adult Coloring at Brightside Aleworks**, Thursdays, Feb. 23, March 20 and April 27 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Join us at Brightside Aleworks (480 Center Place in Altoona) at 6:30 p.m. for a fun night of coloring! We will bring the art supplies; you bring your friends and money for drinks. No registration required.

Children's programming

• **Homeschool Stories & Snacks**, Thursday, Feb. 2 at 2 p.m. Join us for a big kids storytime as we highlight some of our newest books and try out a STEM activity. Snacks provided. For grades K-6. Registration required.

• **DIY Phone Swag**, Saturday, Feb. 11 at 3 p.m. Add some flair to your digital device! We're making phone grips, stands and charm bands. For grades 4-6. Registration required.

• **Pokémon Training**, Wednesday, Feb. 15 at 3:30 p.m. Do you have what it takes to be a Pokémon trainer? Test your skills at several activity stations. For grades K-6. Registration required.

Teen programming

• **Hedgehog and Tater-Tot Day**, Thursday, Feb. 2 from 6-7 p.m. Feb. 2 isn't just for groundhogs. We'll celebrate National Hedgehog Day and National Tater-Tot Day as we create book hedgehogs and snack on some tots. For grades 7-12. Registration required.

• **Oodles of Noodles**, Monday, Feb. 6 from 6-7 p.m. Feeling like your everyday ramen is just too bland? We'll be creating some "souped up" ramen with different recipes and add-ins to kick the flavor up a notch! For grades 7-12. Registration required.

• **Out of the Box Game Night**, Thursdays, Feb. 9 and March 2, from 6-7 p.m. Come raid our collection of games. Try something new or play an old classic. You bring friends; we'll bring snacks. For grades 7-12. Registration required.

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

MEET Leah Lodermeier

Making a difference every day.

After graduating from Valley High School, Leah Lodermeier studied elementary education at the University of Northern Iowa. Today, she teaches third grade at Altoona Elementary School. She says she enjoys teaching with the Southeast Polk Community School District because of how welcoming the atmosphere is. She is also grateful to have a supportive staff and is appreciative of the resources that the district has to offer.

"I enjoyed growing up in a big school district. I always knew I wanted to teach in a 5A school district. As a child, I used to play Southeast Polk in sports, and I always thought to myself how close-knit the community was. I knew it would be the perfect fit for me," she says.

Lodermeier says she likes teaching students at the third-grade level because it is a year of academic, social and emotional growth. Her students are starting to become more independent, and she enjoys watching it unfold. Lodermeier also likes how creative her students are with their writing, hands-on activities and thinking process.

"They use a wide variety of imagination, and I love when they share it. The curriculum for third grade requires new skills. One of my favorite skills to teach so far has been multiplication. I loved watching them get super excited when they master the skills and learning targets for multiplication," Lodermeier says.

One project Lodermeier's students participate in is Leader In Me. Throughout this project, students learn to understand and manage their emotions. They also learn to set and achieve personal goals, have self-confidence and work well with others.

In addition, Lodermeier's students participate in punch cards that reward positive behavior. She believes students should get recognized and praised for succeeding and works to create an atmosphere that is positive, rewarding and engaging.

"Rewards as a teacher have been witnessing academic and social/emotional growth within my classroom. My goal is to teach my students life lessons skills and them being able to take what they learned and use them in the real world," Lodermeier says.

During the the remainder of the school year, Lodermeier is looking forward to collaborating with her team. She says they have been so supportive and helpful as they move through her first year of teaching. Her students have also enjoyed having first-grade buddies, which is rewarding for both grades.

"Altoona Elementary has a special place in my heart. I am so excited to keep learning and reflecting. I'm learning from my kiddos and staff every single day. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for me," she says.

When not teaching, Lodermeier enjoys spending time with family and friends. She likes watching and playing sports as well as being active and outdoors. Her favorite outdoor activity is rollerblading. During the winter months, she enjoys skiing and has been to Colorado many times to ski.

"I've wanted to be a teacher ever since I was in second grade. My mother is my role model, and she was a teacher for 15 years. She showed me how rewarding it is to be a teacher. She always told me that I would make a difference in each child's life whether I believed it or not. I can't thank her enough for the path she has provided for me to achieve my goal," Lodermeier says. ■



Leah Lodermeier

SENIOR

By Stephanie Proper

WHEN a higher level of care may be needed

Senior care is a world of transition, and, often, these transitions are difficult. As we age, we can lose our ability to perform normal daily tasks. Families and friends can often help loved ones in their homes, but sometimes our loved ones may need more attention and care than we can offer. And that is OK. Those of us who work with older adults often spend a good amount of time reassuring families they made the right decision to seek more help with their loved one's care. There can be a lot of guilt with the transition of loved ones moving through higher levels of care. Caregivers can rest assured that, by moving their loved one to a higher level of care, they are not failing but doing what is best for their loved one.

There are several signs that your loved one might need more care than you can manage. One is if their being at home is a safety risk. Falling is a serious health hazard. If your loved one falls frequently, weekly or even daily, it is a sign that they need a level of care that will have someone there to assist them with their mobility. Falls can lead to permanent mobility changes and even death. Another sign is the struggle or inability to perform basic hygiene tasks or dressing. We often take for granted how simple it is for us to put on socks or button our shirts. As we age, our dexterity and balance decline, which results in us needing more help.

Wandering outside of the home or even wandering inside the home to rooms or areas that are atypical to go in can be another indicator that it is time to start looking at senior living. Someone who has worsening dementia can easily forget where they are going or even how to get home. This can cause panic and aggression. Wandering is a sign to start looking for a community with a secured memory area.

Physical or emotional aggression is a sign of advancing dementia. If you see a complete change in personality in an elderly loved one, someone whom you used to describe as sweet and kind is now swearing, mean and aggressive, it may be time for a professional to provide assistance.

A higher level of care doesn't necessarily mean moving to a health center or assisted living. It could also mean in-home health care — having an aide to offer relief to the caregiver and provide assistance with basic tasks to help ensure safety and offer the caregiver a break.

The most important thing to remember is it is normal to feel overwhelmed, and it is OK to ask for help. If you have questions, ask. Call or stop by any of the senior living buildings in the area. We are all happy to help. ■

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



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IS 2023 the year to buy your home?

I am reflective at the start of each new year. We must look backward to be able to move forward with all that has been learned in the real estate market. We learn so much with each upturn and downturn in real estate. I'm sure you're thinking, "Is this a good year to buy my home?" My sincerest and most direct answer is yes. But why?



First, the housing market has been gaining inventory, so you now have more choices to buy in your price range.

Second, there are fewer buyers in the market shopping for a home. In 2022, you had to make an offer on a home before you had seen the inside of the house. Now you can go inside the

home and review it once or twice and even have a day or two to sleep on the purchase before you feel pressured to buy.

Third, prices of homes are leveling off a little but are not going to fall dramatically to make a difference in your purchase price or your house payment. The sooner you get your home purchased, the sooner you can begin to benefit from the growing equity in your own real estate investment.

For those currently renting, each rent payment you make instead of a mortgage payment is helping someone else's investment grow. With a monthly rent payment of \$1,000 per month, that equals \$12,000 each year and, over 5 years, totals \$60,000. The rent payments benefit your landlord instead of building equity in your own home.

It is also less expensive to own than to rent.

So, what is stopping you? Interest rates? I was thrilled to get an interest rate of 9% when I bought my first home. My parents' interest rate was 17%. Current mortgage rates are nowhere near either of those past levels.

Remember, as you get pre-qualified and shop for your new home, no matter the interest rate you purchase your home at, you can always refinance your mortgage. I have some customers that refinanced four or five times as interest rates fell. Your priority should be to find the house for you. We can change your interest rate as rates fall over time. ■

Information provided by Lori Slings, Bankers Trust, NMLS ID: 406021, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5624, lslings@bankersttrust.com, BankersTrust.com/LSlings, Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.



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ANXIETY isn't a sin; it's a signal

In 2019, two out of three Americans said they were anxious or extremely anxious. And that was before the world got crazy. If you struggle with anxiety, you are not alone.

However, some Christians will tell you that you shouldn't feel anxious. It says it right there in Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything...." Unfortunately, this can lead many of us to feel guilty about our anxiety, and, thus, we don't feel like we have a safe place in church to be real about our struggle, which then only increases the anxiety.

When the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he used a Greek verb that indicates continuing action or an ongoing state. So a better translation might be, "Do not ruminate..." or "Stop perpetually worrying..." We all will face anxiety; the key is to see it as a warning light.

When a warning light pops up on your car's dashboard, it's a signal something is wrong and needs to be addressed. Anxiety isn't a sin; it's a signal. Anxiety is a signal to do something, and that something is to pray. Paul goes on to say, "Do not ruminate on your worries, but, in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Prayer can change our brains. Dr. Caroline Leaf, a well-respected cognitive neuroscientist, wrote: "It has been found that 12 minutes of daily focused prayer over an 8-week period can change the brain to such an extent that it can be measured on a brain scan."

God made our brains to change. It's called neuroplasticity. The more we think a thought, the easier it becomes to think that thought again. By ruminating on our worries, we can train our brains to be anxious. Or, by praying and meditating on God's faithfulness, we can train our brains to trust God and be at peace.

When we pray, God leads us. God leads us to let go of the things we can't control and trust Him. And God leads us to act on what we can control. We can control how much time we spend on social media, if we make that counseling appointment, if we find healthy people to hang out with, if we worship and read God's Word, and if we exercise and eat well.

There's not always a quick fix for anxiety, but God provides people and resources to help us experience more of His peace. As you see anxiety as a signal to pray, take action as God leads you, and trust His timing. "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). ■

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



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BENEFITS of special needs trusts

Social benefit programs designed to help people with disabilities typically have restrictions on how much money the beneficiary can have. Caps on monthly income and total assets owned are a major restriction on parents trying to complete an estate plan.



Leaving money directly to a child with disabilities will jeopardize the ability to receive any help from means-tested government programs like Social Security's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (Title XIX). A special needs trust can be the answer for parents.

A special needs trust (SNT) can hold money given to or inherited by a disabled individual. Because the SNT owns the assets, the assets are excluded from asset

limit tests for SSI or Medicaid. The trust can fund quality-of-life improvements for the beneficiary not covered by Medicaid. The SNT is also a way to ensure that other family members — like the siblings of the individual with a beneficiary — aren't left with the responsibility and cost of lifelong care.

The SNT must be drafted so that a beneficiary cannot direct distributions from the trust; the distributions must be purely discretionary. There are restrictions on how the money in the trust can be used. There are also reporting requirements to the State. The existence of a trust of any kind must be disclosed for eligibility purposes, but a properly-drafted SNT will keep assets excluded from resource calculations.

Most importantly, the SNT must be drafted so that it avoids any Medicaid payback through estate recovery when the beneficiary dies. Standard language that is found in other trusts (like a typical minor

child trust or a revocable living trust) risks making the entire balance of the SNT subject to repayment for Medicaid costs.

Choosing a trustee who can not only manage funds but also predict the needs and challenges of the beneficiary can be tricky. The trustee needs to understand the specific guidelines under which the SNT can operate.

Because every state has its own system for administering disability benefits, the SNT must be tailored to match those state-specific rules. The SNT is a highly-specialized legal document that requires knowledge of local Medicaid rules and Federal Social Security law. If you have questions, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning and planning for clients with special needs. ■

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

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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

RESOLVE to care for future burial needs

"It made it so much easier for us..."

"Our loved one was so organized..."

"I am so glad they had everything taken care of..."



These are some of the comments we hear as we meet with families who have the difficult responsibility of burying a loved one. This daunting task is much easier on the family if that loved one has cared for their final arrangements long before they are needed.

How about you?

Will your family be able to make such comments when faced with making your final arrangements?

Do you want a casket burial or cremation? Public viewing and funeral service, a private graveside service, or no service at all? Military honors? Pastor/priest to officiate or an informal sharing of memories?

By pre-arranging, the choice is yours and takes the emotional and financial burden from your family.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.

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HEALTH

By Monica Meier

TAKING care after the holidays

Now that the hustle and bustle of the holidays is over, January often hits people hard as we return to our normal routines. Some people have spent more time with their families since Thanksgiving than they do all year round and miss them. Others have spent equal amounts of time with their families and got caught up in the traditional arguments that happen year after year that make them start to wonder why they are still a part of these holiday traditions. It's also Iowa, and the inclement weather can keep people inside their homes more than they care to be. This can be hard on one's emotional/mental health if a person is used to getting out and being more social. Lastly, the bills start coming in. Gas money for trips, credit cards for gifts, and a stretched everyday budget can create buyer's remorse while creating memories. All these things combined can leave the average person feeling exhausted mentally/physically, so taking time to enjoy life is vital — taking a moment and sitting back with a cup of hot cocoa, watching it peacefully snow, playing a board game with the kids before they return to school, etc. Finding moments to enjoy life ensures that we are filling our own cups before we go back out into the world to fill others'. ■



Information provided by Monica Meier, PhD, MS, TLMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, meier@sstherapyandconsulting.com

HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain

ACHIEVING optimal function

Have you ever wondered how your body heals or knows the exact reaction to a threat in our immune system? The human body has an amazing ability to adapt, change and heal all on its own. This is called innate intelligence.

We are designed to develop and be healthy throughout our lifetimes. With innate intelligence, every cell of your body is connected and controlled through your brain and spinal cord. Your nervous system is the master communication network for innate intelligence. The brain and spinal cord, also known as the central nervous system, control all functions of the body by a process that sends signals from the brain via the nerves and then out to the body through the peripheral nervous system. It is vitally important for the body parts to always have communication and stay connected with the brain.

One important reason for this connection is for restoring, repairing and healing. We all need to be able to adapt to our ever-changing environment. Physical, chemical and emotional stressors cause the body to lose communication with that network, leaving us weaker and more susceptible to injury or illness because it isn't performing and supporting us optimally. The most common way for those signals to be disrupted is through misalignment in the spine.

Chiropractic is about restoring function. Better communication between the brain and body is our driving force. Chiropractic frees up those signals of innate intelligence to flow from your brain to the body, allowing us to properly develop, heal and achieve optimal function. ■

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

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HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

THC content and benefits of hemp

This is hemp-derived. That's hemp-derived. What's up with all this hemp? Is it marijuana? What's the difference? Scientifically, there's not much difference between hemp and marijuana. It's really the law that separates the two. According to the law, hemp is the strain of the cannabis sativa plant that contains 0.3% or less of THC by dry weight. Marijuana typically contains 5-30% THC. The cannabis industry has flourished in states where marijuana is illegal due to the 2018 Farm Bill that legalized industrial hemp. The seeds and oil from hemp are rich in protein, fiber and magnesium. They also contain high levels of Omega-3, which contribute to relief from symptoms of discomfort and improve heart and skin health. Besides its wellness effects, fibers from hemp stalk are extremely strong and have been used for more than 2,000 years as material for clothing, construction and food supply. Hemp cultivation is exceedingly more environmentally friendly versus crops such as flax and cotton. It grows quicker and under a wider array of conditions. It can absorb carbon from the air and transform it into plant materials, and it can decontaminate soil by absorbing harmful heavy metals and turning them into harmless plant matter. Since THC is so popular, the spotlight on marijuana plants seems brighter. Fortunately, hemp can provide many of the same benefits. Ask your local cannabis retailer for more information, and you're likely to discover how going heavy on the hemp will get you the results you're looking for. ■



Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., #106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251 and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., #3, Altoona, 515-967-4036.

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WELLNESS

By Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD

2023 food trends

With the vast array of food we see in grocery stores, restaurants and on the Internet, food trends and flavor profiles are constantly changing. In past years, we've seen kombucha, cold brews, pumpkin spice and plant-based foods all grow in popularity. What might we see more of in 2023? Here are some of my predictions:



Sweet and spicy combos

Korean and other Asian flavors often combine sweet and spicy flavors (can we make “swicy” a word?) into a single entrée, and I predict we will be seeing even more of these flavor combinations this coming year. Think hot, spicy honey drizzled over fried chicken or pizza, chili added to chocolate, maybe even some hot sauce added to ice cream. I think we will be seeing many new foods with swicy flavor combinations.

Mushrooms everywhere

You've likely seen shiitakes, portabellas and cremini mushrooms in your store or on menus, but, in 2023, I predict we will see many more specialty mushrooms being added to our cuisine. Mushrooms are a wonderful addition to meals as they add a great savory depth to dishes, a flavor known as umami, and are incredibly nutritious.

Alcohol-free cocktails

The desire for mocktails is growing rapidly, partially due to New Year's resolutions and also as we learn more about the long-term health implications of some of our bad habits. Restaurants are starting to cater to this demand with “virgin cocktails.” Non-alcoholic beer has been growing in popularity in Europe, and we're seeing more and more breweries pick up on the trend. This trend will likely continue into homes with folks mixing up some fun new flavors with new products.

Boards for everything

Charcuterie has become a household word over the past few years, and now people are turning up the creativity. I first saw the “butter board” trend on Tik Tok and have since seen it leaching out into various menus ever since. A thick coating of gourmet butter spread on a serving board and then various toppings like sea salt, sun dried tomatoes, and herbs are added along with French bread, crackers, crostini, etc. I predict that we will continue to see serving boards being used for everything from breakfast spreads to dessert. I mean, doesn't a platter of chocolate sauce with strawberries, marshmallows and cookies for dipping sound amazing?

Curry

Curry is not new; it is a complex type of cuisine that crosses many countries and cultures. There are Indian curries, Thai curries, Japanese curries, etc. that vary in flavor and preparation. Most curries are a dish with a heavy sauce made with a combination of various herbs and spices. I think we will see more curry options as recipe ideas and more curry ingredients to try in your own home.

No matter which food trends we end up seeing this year, it's always fun to try new and exciting flavors. ■

Information provided by Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD, corporate dietitian,
Fareway, 6005 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, 515-252-9962.

RECIPE

ACCOMPLISH health goals with better-for-you family meals

(Family Features) Setting out on a mission to eat healthier starts with creating goals and working to achieve them with those you love. To help make nutritious eating more manageable, call together your family and work with one another to create a menu everyone can enjoy while staying on track.

Connecting an array of recipes that all can agree on starts with versatile ingredients like dairy. Gathering at the table with your loved ones while enjoying delicious, nutritious recipes featuring yogurt, cheese and milk can nourish both body and soul.

For example, the key dairy ingredients in this recipe from Milk Means More provide essential nutrients for a healthy diet. The cheese varieties in feta roasted salmon and tomatoes provide vitamin B-12 for healthy brain and nerve cell development and are a good source of calcium and protein, which are important for building and maintaining healthy bones.

To find more nutritious meal ideas to fuel your family's health goals, visit MilkMeansMore.org. ■

Feta roasted salmon and tomatoes

Recipe courtesy of Marcia Stanley, MS, RDN, culinary dietitian, on behalf of Milk Means More

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 cups halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or dried dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, divided
- 1 1/2 pounds salmon or halibut fillets, cut into four serving-size pieces
- 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425 F. Line 18-by-13-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Lightly spray foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.



- In medium bowl, toss tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, oregano or dill weed, salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.
- Place fish pieces, skin side down, on one side of prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining pepper. Lightly press feta cheese on top of fish. Pour tomato mixture on other side of prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.
- Place salmon on serving plates. Spoon tomato mixture over top.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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'Singin' In The Rain JR.'

Feb. 17-19, Feb. 24-26, March 3-5.
Friday performances at 7 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday shows at 2 p.m.
CAP Theatre, 201 First Ave. S., Altoona

The "Greatest Movie Musical of All Time" is faithfully and lovingly adapted by Broadway legends Betty Comden and Adolph Green, from their original award-winning screenplay, in "Singin' in the Rain JR." Hilarious situations, snappy dialogue and a hit-parade score of Hollywood standards make the production a guaranteed good time for performers and audience members alike. Tickets on sale online at captheatre.simplivetix.com.



Winter Chowder Ride

Saturday, Feb. 11, 10:30 a.m.
Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co., 101 Main St. S.E., Bondurant

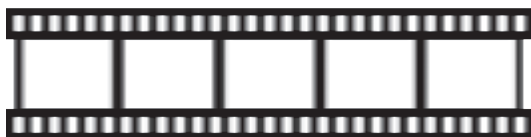
Enjoy a free, easy winter ride from Bondurant to Berwick and back on the Chichaqua Valley Trail (10 miles). Check in at 10:30 a.m.; and the ride starts at 11 a.m. Make sure to stop by Berwick Congregational Church to warm up. After the ride, savor a chowder lunch at Founders Irish Pub or partake in some chili at Reclaimed Rails at no cost. You can enter to win a prize by submitting a selfie with the tag #2023ChowderRide (make sure the post is public). Register online at <https://conta.cc/3w1EMaw>.



Craft and Vendor Show

Jan. 28, March 4, May 6, June 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Bondurant Legion Hall, 315 Second St. N.W.

Valerie and Cathy's Boutique is hosting this monthly craft and vendor show.



'USS Iowa' premiere screening

Feb. 19, 2-4 p.m.
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Camp Dodge, 7105 N.W. 70th Ave., Johnston

Join Iowa PBS for a free, in-person premiere of the new documentary, "USS Iowa." This film shines light on the USS Iowa, a legendary battleship built to defend America during World War II. Its presence as a symbol of naval war power and now as a living museum is intertwined with the men and women who served the USS Iowa for more than 80 years through campaigns of triumph and tragedy.

During this special event in Johnston, attendees will have the chance to view historical artifacts and exhibits at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum. Light refreshments will be served.

"The USS Iowa battleship was the lead ship of the last and most devastating class of battleship," said Iowa PBS Producer and Director Patrick Boberg. "Known as the 'Battleship of Presidents,' her story ranges from wartime victories to a tragic peacetime catastrophe, and she may not have been saved and turned into a museum without the State of Iowa's financial and political support."

For more information and to register, visit iowapbs.org/events. "USS Iowa" will air on statewide Iowa PBS Wednesday, March 1 at 6:30 p.m.



Za-Ga-Zig Shrine Circus

Friday - Sunday, Jan. 27-29
Jacobson Exhibition Center, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

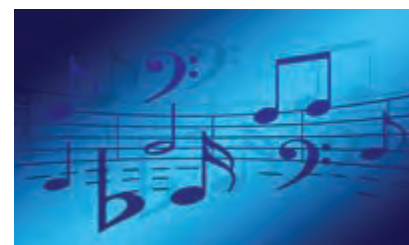
The Za-Ga-Zig Shrine Circus will feature The Royal Hanneford Circus. Schedule is 7 p.m. Friday; 9:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday; and noon and 5 p.m. Sunday. To learn more about Za-Ga-Zig, go to zagazigshrine.org. For event information and tickets, visit iowastatefairgrounds.org/event-calendar/za-ga-zig-shrine-circus.

Iowa Wild

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines

This month's home games for Iowa's AHL team. More information at iowawild.com.

- Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. vs. Coachella Valley Firebirds



Botanical Blues

Sundays, January through March
Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Enjoy this winter concert series at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. The Jan. 22 concert features Tony Bohnenkamp, a veteran of countless piano bars, music venues and private functions across the Midwest. His performances are driven by audience requests and draw from his massive and diverse catalog, ranging from Billy Joel to Elton John, Van Morrison to Neil Diamond, Journey to Johnny Cash, and Garth Brooks to The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, with countless songs from the 60s through today scattered everywhere in-between. The Jan. 29 concert features The Drama Kings, a group that specializes in the music of New Orleans, from Louis Armstrong to Dr. John. For more information, visit dmbotanicalgarden.com.



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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

Ice Ice Baby! Hopefully, just where we want it to be...in our Skating Rink!

ICE RINK OPEN

The City of Altoona's Ice Rink which was donated by the Iowa Wild, in partnership with Wells Fargo, is now open (pending freezing temperatures). This donation was a continuation of their Community Rinks program.

Mayor, Dean O'Connor stated, "We are proud of our parks and trails and all the amenities they have to offer, and this simply creates a wonderful partnership instilling the importance of being active and social."

Altoona's Ice Rink is located in Ironwood Park, 2222 3rd Ave. SW.



EMERGENCY ACCESS

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway of snow and ice. If you do require an emergency response, a cleared approach to your door will be the safest route for the emergency responders and you. Maintain your outdoor lights to illuminate your numerical house numbers. If you call "911" for an emergency response, turn your lights on to make it easier and faster for responders to find your home.



CITY TRAILS IN WINTER

The City of Altoona does clear the snow from the trails during winter. However, we do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last, following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Many communities close all trails during winter months but we want ours to be open for use. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.



WINTER TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT

Please remember that your garbage and recycling totes must be accessible 18 inches from the curb. Your clean driveway approach may be the best option during heavy snow times.

Please do NOT place your tote on city streets. City snowplows cannot clear snow properly when totes are placed on streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow if totes are placed in the road.

Check out the city's new website at www.altoona-ia.com for snow removal regulations and updates.



When ice forms where we don't want it, our awesome Streets Department will be on it! Please make sure to maintain a safe distance from the trucks, to ensure they have enough space and everyone stays safe.

POISED for successes

My family moved to Altoona in 1991 — a time when the best place in town for a 12-year-old to shop for snacks was Lutz Pharmacy. My parents, Mike and Connie Vincent, opened our family business at the end of the strip mall attached to the old Hy-Vee that year. Being the owners of a start-up business in a small town, the Altoona Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in their success. Paullette Franklin was a name I heard often and even more later when I first gained interest in taking over the family business. I saw my parents participate in events and rely on chamber resources. Eventually, my mother was a part of chamber leadership.



When I took ownership of our family business, there was no doubt the chamber would be an important partner in our continued success. Nothing told that story more than in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The response by chamber leadership and staff during such a difficult time was impressive. Regular and useful correspondence seemed to flow daily. Questions were answered with solid resources, even to the point where I found myself using their information to help clients in other parts of the state.

As we emerged, we saw the Chamber move quickly and dynamically towards a new business environment, with a continued focus on its members and how they can best succeed. We wrote a new mission statement, focused our purpose, and moved towards clearly defined goals.

The city of Altoona is an amazing place. Many of us have watched it grow from a small town with an amusement park to what is now one of the leading communities in Iowa. We're here because the people of Altoona — business owners, city staff and members of the community — saw opportunities for new and exciting development.

Moving into 2023, the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce continues its focus on the people and businesses of Altoona and new opportunities presented because of recent and past successes. We look to the Olde Town Revitalization Project to offer new shopping and entertainment options. Development north of Interstate 80 promises continued employment expansion and ancillary business development. Residential growth in nearly every direction brings us new clients, customers and community members on a near daily basis.

I can't think of a more exciting time to be a member of this community as we look ahead, knowing that behind us are a few tough years. Aware that, despite some adversity, this community is poised to see its greatest successes soon. The Altoona Chamber of Commerce hopes to support and inspire the members of our community in their continued pursuit of community enrichment.

I'm proud to be from Altoona, proud to own a business here, and proud to be a long-time member of the AACC. I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate in "what's next" for the people, places and opportunities of this community. ■

Information provided by Jared Vincent, 2023 Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce president, owner of Insurance Station, Inc.

Annual Awards Dinner
04.01.2023

TICKETS ON SALE
JANUARY 30TH

\$70/person
\$520/table of 8

Cocktail hour, Catered Dinner,
Program, Award Presentation, and
more!

altoona
area chamber of commerce
www.altoonachamber.org

OUT & ABOUT

RESIDENTS' Choice

Residents' Choice certificates were delivered to Altoona "favorites" of the annual poll.



Board members for CAP Theatre



Mary Simon, Michelle Beem, Kathy Quick, Karla Keller and Edward Kouangvongthien with Bankers Trust



Gabriella Zanders, Rebecca Adams, Brandie Adams and Lori Coker with Doggie Stylez



Kelsey Redmond and Melissa Horton with Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce



Kayla and Eric Vanderploeg with Eagle Homes



Tish Bagley, Luke Sibley and Debbie McReynolds with Edward Jones



Dr. Amy Jensen with Anchor Physical Therapy



Joe Tollari with Metro Heating & Cooling



Brad Skinner with Skinner Law Office, P.C.



Greg Pollak with High Pointe Church

RESIDENTS' Choice

Residents' Choice certificates were delivered to Altoona "favorites" of the annual poll.



Staff at Prairie Vista Village



Sherrie Gibson, Robert Lees, Amie Mathis and Ned Looney with Caring Hands



Staff at Scooter's Altoona



Heather Rawlins with Iowa Realty



Dr. Steven Fuller with Fuller Associates Family Dentistry



Luke Peterson with Luke Peterson Insurance



Tim Forbes with State Farm Insurance



Paul Hartwell, Bruce Mason and Shannon Fisher with Altoona Campus

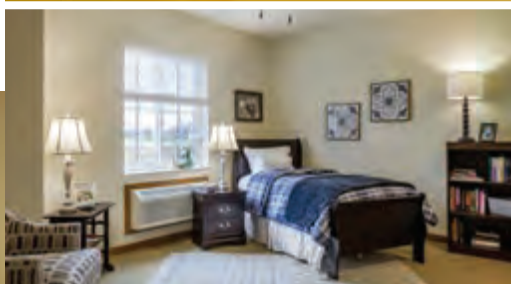


Nikki Morgan, Alyssa McCarl and Ellie Lessard with SkinFusion FX

THIS IS YOUR TIME FOR A NEW BEGINNING

- ★ Exceptional Care
- ★ Extra Ordinary Living
- ★ Offering Rent Specials *NOW*

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MEMORY
CARE
**NOW
OPEN!**



INDEPENDENT LIVING | ASSISTED LIVING | CLOSER CARE | MEMORY CARE



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515-313-3814



Shawn Kinnison

welcometuscany@edencrestliving.com

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MEET
REALTOR
BECKI SCOUTEN
515-639-4115

For the last 20 years, I have worked in marketing, sales, and recruitment in the non-profit sector. Now serving as a realtor, recruiting potential buyers for the sale of your home or marketing your home to the broadest audience is something I am passionate about. My commitment to my clients is to serve you with excellence, integrity, and care. I was raised in the Des Moines area and my family has been proud East Siders for decades. I know how special and unique the Des Moines area is and am so excited to help you find a home here that meets your needs or the buyer who needs your home.

My greatest joys are my husband Adam and our three amazing kids. I love garage sales, roadside finds, interior design, and DIY gone right. I see myself as passionate, driven, and persistent. I am ecstatic to be a part of the PCA team!



CONNECT WITH BECKI!