

NORTH POLK

DECEMBER 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

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for the holidays

Classic beef Wellington

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Christian after-school program offers Wild Wednesdays

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WELCOME

IT'S BETTER to give than to receive

Do you remember hearing that phrase as a child and wondering who in the world could possibly agree with that?

I do, and I definitely enjoyed receiving gifts more than giving them. As a youngster, it is a challenge to think of many things in life more enjoyable than opening gifts. Just look at any kid's eyes when he or she has a wrapped present at arm's length.

As an adult, that seems to change — at least it has for me. When my kids or wife ask me what I want as a gift now, I usually come up with something exciting like undershirts, underwear or socks. Those are things I want and could certainly use. My family members don't seem to share my enthusiasm for these items, so I often receive other gifts. I appreciate them, but I really don't need them. In fact, for most of us adults, there are very few things in life that we now truly need.

My mother used to tell me this when I would ask the same thing to her prior to her birthdays and the holidays. What she really wanted was to get together in person, play games and share stories. The most important gift to her, and now to me, is time. It is our most precious commodity, and many of us are learning to treat it like gold. As we age, we learn to say no to the many requests of our time that don't fit with our personal priorities. And, hopefully, we commit more of our time to the things that do.

Meanwhile, few things in life — including opening presents as a child — can bring as much inner joy as volunteering our time to help others. Most all of us think we are too busy to make time for volunteer efforts, and that is understandable. Even so, I am amazed by the many people who do volunteer and make such an impact on the lives of others including the elderly, the lonely and the many who are truly in need.

You may have thought about volunteering your time but were not sure where to start. In this month's cover story, we share the accounts of local residents who felt the same way and then made the important step to actually do it. They don't regret it, and you won't either.

Look inside for examples of volunteer opportunities during this holiday season and throughout the year that will help you learn how good it can feel to give rather than to receive.

Thanks for reading. ■



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The GIFT of TIME

Volunteers spread joy
for the holidays

By Jackie Wilson

Whether it is the family gatherings, longtime traditions, religious ceremonies, gift giving, glowing candles or a blanket of glistening snow, there is something about the holidays that warms our hearts and sparks our spirit of generosity. We give goodies, cards, gifts and more to our friends and family. And, donations flow to charities.

For those who want to do more than open their wallets, another precious gift waits to be given: time. Volunteers help to spread holiday cheer, and they find themselves rewarded in return by the joy of giving.

Ellie Puttmann, 11, of Polk City asked for food donations for the Comet Cupboard instead of birthday gifts for her birthday party.
Photo by Jackie Wilson

FEATURE

Helping families stay together

Kent Altena of Polk City supports children at risk by volunteering and serving on the board of trustees for Children and Families of Iowa.

As a board member, he is responsible for fundraising, assisting with charity events and making sure endowment funds are appropriately used. Children and Families of Iowa (CFI) is a private nonprofit organization founded in 1888. It provides services in all 99 of Iowa's counties, serving more than 35,000 individuals last year.

CFI offers a domestic violence shelter, mental health and substance abuse therapy, childcare for low-income families, in-home services for at risk families and work readiness programs for youth and adults.

Altena donated to CFI for years. The foundation noticed his involvement and asked him to be on the board. Altena became interested in the organization because, as a child, his own family situation was problematic.

"My parents were alcoholics, and I lived with my grandparents," he explains. "The reason I give is they help keep families at risk together."

He says CFI provides for the greatest need for kids, and he doesn't want to see families suffer as he did.

"I'm thankful I can be there for people today. I'm blessed. I feel fortunate as I have been blessed," he reflects.

There are several ways to volunteer for CFI during the holidays.

"People can donate gifts and basic household necessities," he says. "Some families or kids may never get out during Christmas. Sometimes that's the only gift kids get — are the ones donated to them."

Last year, when Altena turned 50 years old, he wanted a challenge. He performed 500 deadlifts every hour on the hour for 24 hours. All night long, he performed the physical feat, raising \$1,800 for CFI.

"Think of families who have been through domestic violence, suffer from illness or are poor. They don't have any money to spend for their kids," he says.

He's grateful his employer donates matching funds, and he gets paid days off to volunteer. He maxes out his donation each year to maximize his employer's donations to the charity.

"There's a lot of good organizations in Iowa. The reason I give to CFI is because it's the largest in Iowa for families at risk. They don't have to be stuck in a bad family situation



Kent Altena of Polk City is passionate about Children and Families of Iowa. He serves on its board and volunteers.

without help. CFI sees the greatest need, and they help keep families together. They do good work," he says.

He suggests helping out in big or small ways. "Iowans are blessed. Be a blessing to others as you've been blessed yourself," he says.

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FEATURE

Comet Cupboard donations instead of gifts

Ellie Puttmann is a typical fifth grader who likes sleepovers and hanging out with her friends. When it came to planning her 11th birthday party, she thought of a 1980s theme. Yet, on the invitation, she requested something else: no gifts. Instead, partygoers were asked to bring food for the Comet Cupboard.

"I invited 35 girls," she says. "With that many girls, I didn't feel I needed all these gifts. We thought about where to donate it to."

"It could be a lot of gifts," adds her mom, Jen. "Instead of giving a bunch of trinkets, we talked about something else."

Ellie and Jen discussed various places to donate. Big Creek Elementary, where she attends school, has various donation months, such as a cereal donation drive. They wanted to support local, so they chose the Comet Cupboard, which is located at the Polk City Methodist Church.

When her friends showed up at the party, bags of food overflowed.

"My friends asked me, 'Why no gifts?' I wanted to do something different than other parties," she says. "I thought my friends might scan over the invite. It surprised me how much those girls helped."

Ellie says there's a great need for donations, not only during the holidays, but year-round.

"There are people who don't have enough money to buy food. They need help more than we do. It's important that they have food and drinks."

After the party, the family took the food to the Comet Cupboard. They brought out wagons to load the food. Once inside, they helped sort food in the designated spots.

"At first, I thought all the donations were in the cupboard outside," says Ellie. "They stock it up daily. I was surprised at how much food there was."

Jen says she's proud of her daughter.

"It was an easy way to give back. I was pleasantly surprised when we discussed it. It was fun to have a hands-on project as well."

Ellie says it was a success.

"I like the idea because it helps others. It felt good to do something for others," she reflects. "It's a good feeling."



Connie Passmore volunteers with the Blessing Box at Elkhart Christian Church.

Blessing Box

Communities in northern Polk County talked about serving the hungry in the small towns of Alleman, Sheldahl, Slater, Elkhart and Polk City. People could go to the Ankeny food bank, yet that was too far to drive for some elderly folks. About six years ago, local churches got together to open up the Blessing Box food pantry.

The Blessing Box is located at Elkhart Christian Church. The Elkhart location was chosen because it was handicap accessible and on one level. It serves as a food pantry, obtaining items from the Iowa Food Bank.

Kathy Wampler, who lives near Slater and Alleman, has volunteered at the Blessing Box since its inception.

"It was especially important in Alleman, as there was a senior citizen's home. There weren't any food pantries in the north Polk County area close by," she says.

"I've always been fortunate," she continues. "I've never been food insecure. I know there are a lot of people who need our assistance. If I can give back to people in my community, it's one way to do that."

Connie Passmore serves as president of the board for the Blessing Box. People from church asked if she could help.

"I was retired, and I had free time," she recalls. "Christmas time is important in helping out as well. We receive anonymous names of children from the schools or the community who might be in need. We divide the names among



The Blessing Box at Elkhart Christian Church serves as a food pantry for north Polk County.

congregations and each picks a name from the tree and buys gifts for them."

During the holidays, the Blessing Box gives out family meals. For Thanksgiving, they give turkeys and all the fixings, while Christmas boxes contain a ham and holiday food items. Some congregation members bake Christmas cookies to put in the boxes. Connie volunteers, assembling boxes and coordinating gifts. When the North Polk Schools and businesses hold food drives, she helps to schedule deliveries.

Passmore says that recipients of the Blessing Box and gifts are appreciative.

"They are very thankful. We received thank you cards telling us that they helped them have a better Christmas."

Passmore, who has lived in rural Elkhart for 38 years, is vested in her community.

FEATURE

"It makes you feel good to give back. It's not that big of a community. It's nice to see smiles on faces when you help them out," she says. "It makes me feel good, too."

The Blessing Box is available for qualifying north Polk residents. The food pantry is open the first Saturday of the month and the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. During that time, donations may be dropped off. Food, personal hygiene and household goods may also be dropped off at any of the participating north Polk churches. Cash donations are acceptable, and 100% is used to purchase food in bulk.

Winter clothing for immigrants

Lakeside Fellowship Church recently gave away a truckload of winter clothing items to Burmese immigrants.

More than a decade ago, Lakeside became involved with the Chin Christian Church in Urbandale. Most members are first-generation immigrants from Burma/Myanmar.

Trevor Meers, pastor at Lakeside, says the congregation responded and purchased new and donated like-new winter clothing.



Deacon Jeff De Vries presents winter clothing items to Burmese Pastor Ro in Urbandale.

"We lined an entire truck bed full of clothing," he says. "That shows the heart of the Polk City community. It's a generous community."

Feedback from the recipients was overwhelming.

"They were very grateful for the items. The kids are always growing and need bigger items. We delivered it before the temperatures dropped, just in time." ■

Support a charity from this article

- **Comet Cupboard:** Donate food or money, located at the Polk City United Methodist Church, www.polkcityumc.org/np-comet-cupboard. Now through Dec. 21, drop off food, toiletries or pet food to the PC Fire/Police department and enter your name and phone number for a chance to win a ride in a fire truck or police car.
- **Blessing Box:** Drop off food or donations at Elkhart Christian Church, located at 252 N.W. Washington Ave. in Elkhart.
- **Children & Families of Iowa:** Sponsor, attend or volunteer at one of CFI's annual fundraising events or donate online at www.cfiowa.org, or mail a check to: 1111 University Ave., Des Moines, IA 50314.
- **Lakeside Fellowship:** Lakeside is planning a relief mission trip in 2023 to Texas. For more information, visit www.lakesidefellowship.com. ■

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EDUCATION By Jackie Wilson

WILD Wednesdays

Christian after-school program offered at Elkhart church.

A former teacher is offering North Polk kids a chance to experience a Christian community in a warm and welcoming environment.

Wild Wednesdays is an after-school program lead by Gail Aurand and held at the Elkhart Christian Church located at 252 N.W. Washington Ave.

Children from first through fifth grade are invited to the program, regardless of church membership or affiliation.

The after-school program incorporates four parts to the session. The first aspect is a non-competitive game or recreational component. The second part is the music time. As a retired music teacher, Gail is excited about this aspect. During music time, students will learn how to use boomwhackers (plastic tubes offering different pitches and melodies).

The third part is a Bible exploration.

"This isn't a time for lecture or memorizing scripture or Bible verses. It's a time when kids can ask questions."

The final component is dinner. Kids will help serve and clean up and share food family style with adult volunteers. Each dinner has a theme or table topics. The idea is that kids can learn what it's like to be in a Christian community.

Gail's husband, Joel, is the pastor at Elkhart Christian Church. She says the pair has offered the program GenOn Ministries (an intergenerational ministry) to other church communities they've been involved with. The curriculum is based on introducing the gospel to the community.

"We've used this successfully before," says Gail. "Our own kids grew up with the program. They still have relationship with their table parents. Kids could go to another trusted adult, instead of their parents, if they had questions."

Joel and Gail came up with the idea after a church board cited a lack of community space in Elkhart.

"We could meet at Kippy's, but it's not family oriented. We wanted to provide a safe space for kids. Anybody is welcome," she says.

She feels a caring Christian atmosphere is important for kids.

"We want kids to grow up well-rounded. Parents are working on the emotional, physical and educational aspect to raising a child. It's hard to parent — church can help," she says. "But they need a spiritual aspect to be well-rounded. It takes a village to raise them."

The program is Wednesdays from Jan. 13 - April 26. The cost is \$60 per child with \$100 per family limit and includes dinner, snacks, supplies and curriculum. Scholarships are available for families in need. To register, visit www.elkhartcciowa.com. ■



Gail Aurand will lead the new Christian after-school program at Elkhart Christian Church.

A DOSE of optimism

We all understand the importance of being optimistic, but sometimes it's difficult when the headlines are full of doom and gloom. The stock market slump, persistent inflation and rising interest rates dominate economic news.

In the spirit of the holidays, I want to offer a dose of optimism to help you wash down the eggnog.

Retirement income taxes are going away next year in Iowa. If you are 55 or older, you will not pay state income taxes on pension income and distributions from IRAs, annuities and employer-sponsored plans like 401(k)s. The same goes for distributions from deferred compensation plans and plans maintained or contributed to by a self-employed person. This applies even if you are still working.

Medicare premiums are going down, and Social Security is going up. The standard Part B premium will be \$164.90, \$5.20 lower than in 2022 (I didn't forget about the big jump in 2022; I'm being optimistic here, remember). Social Security is getting its biggest bump in 40 years, an 8.7% cost-of-living adjustment or COLA. The



average benefit will increase by \$146 monthly from \$1,681 to \$1,827.

Those are a couple of small wins. The big wins come when you have a customized, written retirement plan. We've been talking with the individuals and families we work with about taking advantage of the economic conditions. We know that, on average, recessions happen every five to six years, so when we helped them put together their retirement plans, we had that in mind. Then when the recession hits, we look at action steps like Roth conversions or Dollar-Cost-Averaging and decide if it's time to execute.

You may have been watching your 401(k) take a hit and think it's too late to act. Or you've been told to sit back and wait it out. I disagree. Now is the time to take control. You don't have to be a victim of market conditions. There are likely things you can do right now to help you get through this economic storm and put yourself in a better position for the next one. Then you can worry less about the stock market swings and focus more on the joy — something we all want to experience during the holiday season.

Take the first step to building a recession-resistant retirement plan. Check out our online Journey to Retirement workshop. Details are below.

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

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COMMUNITY

KIWANIS Seniors of the Month

The Kiwanis Club of Polk City announced its Seniors of the Month for November are Olivia Moody, Reagan Nelson and Teagan Wiseman.

Olivia Moody. Olivia has strong support from her parents Lisa and Don Moody and her sisters Sarah Moody and Chelsey Lane. At school, Olivia's favorite class is newspaper, but she enjoys all English and social studies classes. Olivia is also active in many school organizations including the student council, principal's council, GSA, FFA, speech, and the Students for Environmental Protection and Conservation. Outside of school, Olivia is a member of the Chichaqua Bottoms Ducks Unlimited chapter, teaches Sunday school at her church and is the 2022 Central Iowa Honey Queen. After graduation, Olivia intends to go to a college yet to be determined for a double major in journalism and environmental studies. Her honors include National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society and Gold Honor Roll each year in school.



Reagan Nelson. "Over the course of my high school career, I have been interested in academia, specifically in the biological sciences," says Reagan, child of Deann and Barry Nelson and sibling of Lincoln Nelson. "My interest in genetics was sparked in Mr. Middleton's seventh-grade science class when I was introduced to the Punnett square. From there on, I was hooked, working out the genetic profiles of corn with my dad and talking about gene editing every chance I got. I am very involved with volunteering during the summer at Iowa Garden for Good in Madrid. Over the past three years, I have assisted with planting, maintaining and harvesting produce for area food pantries. At the garden, I have also guided volunteer groups and look forward to helping out in the future. When I graduate from North Polk, my goal is to also have my AA degree from DMACC so I can continue my education as ISU in genetics." Reagan has been president of National Honor Society and involved in band, speech, high school play, jazz band, FFA and student council. Reagan has lettered in band for three years, made Gold Honor roll for four years and been named to the DMACC President's List and Dean's Award.



Teagan Wiseman. "My name is Teagan Wiseman, and I'm a senior student at North Polk. My parents are Russ and Krista Wiseman of Polk City, and I have two sisters, Courtney and Amrynn. At North Polk, I am involved in tennis in the spring and try to attend and support as many school events as I can. I am a member of the National Spanish Honor Society and have been on the Gold Honor Roll for three years. Outside of school, I babysit and dogsit for many local families along with being an aisles online shopper at Hy-Vee. My plans after graduation are to attend DMACC followed by a four-year university to earn a degree in the health science field in hopes of attending physician assistant school." ■



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POLK CITY Community Library news

Library holiday hours

The Library will be closed Friday, Dec. 23 through Monday, Dec. 26; Monday, Jan. 2 and Monday, Jan. 16 (staff training).

• **Winter Reading Program for all ages,** Jan. 1-31. Watch the library or Facebook pages for more details and the Beanstack link. If you participated in our Summer Reading Program, you are already signed up, just log in and accept the challenge.

• **Story Time:** Mondays and Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Join us at the library for stories, songs and an activity or craft. Choose the day that works best for you. Every story can be logged in our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, too.

• **Geri-Fit® Strength Training Workouts** Mondays at 9 a.m. Strength training workouts that work for all ages and fitness levels. Geri-Fit is challenging, effective and safe to do. The Geri-Fit® program requires a set of light dumbbell weights, a sturdy chair and water to drink during the workout. Ages 50 and over. Stretch bands and a Zoom link are available upon request. No class Dec. 26 or Jan. 2.

• **Chair Yoga,** Tuesdays, 9 a.m. Join Rachel via Zoom. We will be broadcasting the class on the big screen in the library, or you can join us from home. Yoga is for everyone and every body. Yoga is not for flexible people but for people who want to become more flexible. This chair yoga practice will include breath work, mindfulness and simple, easy movements to release tension, reduce pain and restore your body to optimum movement. Props needed are an armless chair, like a kitchen chair, and a small hand towel or kitchen dish towel. Join the Zoom meeting on our website at polkcitylibrary.org. No class Dec. 27.

• **Ageless Grace Workouts,** Wednesdays, 9 a.m. Ageless Grace is a cutting-edge brain fitness program based on neuroplasticity that activates all five functions of the brain. This exercise program is performed in a chair and is based on everyday movements that are natural and focus on the healthy longevity of the body and brain. The only material needed is a chair. If you would like to participate from home via Zoom, call the library ahead of time. No class Dec. 28.

• **Ladies' Wednesday Coffee,** Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Ladies, join us for coffee and conversation.

• **Open Card Games,** Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. We have the cards and cribbage boards; you pick what game to play each Thursday. Grab a friend and have fun. Ages 17 and older.

• **Sit N Stitch,** Thursdays, 6-8 p.m. Bring your current project and join us for stitching and conversation.

• **Men's Friday Coffee,** 10 a.m. to noon. Gentlemen, drop in for coffee and conversation. Enjoy spending time and having a few laughs or interesting discussions with other men from around the area. No meeting Friday, Dec. 23.

• **Wednesday Book Club,** Wednesday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m., "Fault Lines" by Emil Itami. A bittersweet love story and a piercing portrait of female identity. Read the book then join us for the discussion.

• **Baby and Me,** Thursday, Jan. 5, 10 a.m. Join us at the library for a bonding experience between you and your baby. Learn nursery rhymes and songs and hear board books that are specially designed with you and your baby in mind.

• **NEW: Play Lab,** Saturday, Jan. 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring the kids for some extra special self-guided library play time. The program room will be set up with different centers designed to stimulate learning through play. Activities may include games, crafts, sensory activities and more. Ages 3-10. Parental supervision is required at all times.

• **Adult Crafternoon, Personalized Coasters,** Monday, Jan. 9 at 1 p.m. Join us for a fun afternoon making individualized coasters. All materials provided. Ages 17 and older please. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Friends of the Library Meeting,** Wednesday, Jan. 11, 6:30 p.m. The Friends of the Polk City Community Library have four scheduled meetings per year. All meetings are open to members and the public. Anyone interested in supporting the library is welcome and encouraged to attend.

• **Music and Movement,** Thursday, Jan. 12, 10 a.m. Come shimmy and shake with your child. Dance and sing while building pre-reading skills with rhythm and rhyme.

• **Tea: The Basics and Beyond with Red Dragon Tea,** Thursday, Jan. 12, 6 p.m. Are you curious about the differences between types of tea? Wondering if you can ever find a cup of tea that tastes really good? Ryan and Mary from Red Dragon Herbs and Teas will be presenting an entertaining and informative session that covers not only herbs (including the ones you may have in your own garden), but how to make herbal blends and teas. You'll learn about their own story and how they developed their family-owned business, teach attendees about herbs and tea blends, and share

some stories along the way. Attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy a delicious cup of tea during the program.

• **Library closed for staff training,** Monday, Jan. 16

• **Book Club (K-second grade),** Tuesday, Jan. 17, 4 p.m. "Rum Pum Pum" by David L. Harrison and Jane Yolen. Pick up your copy of the book while supplies last. Read, then join us for some fun discussion.

• **Adult Coloring,** Tuesday, Jan. 17, 5-7 p.m. Join us for a relaxing evening of coloring. Colored pencils and gel pens will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own. Ages 17 and older. No registration required.

• **Messy Munchkins,** Thursday, Jan. 19, 10-10:45 a.m. Does your toddler or preschooler always make a mess? It is actually a great way for them to learn. Visit us and let your child explore sensory tables we will put out. Have your child wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty.

• **Adult Evening D.I.Y. Geometric Paintings,** Thursday, Jan. 19, 6 p.m. Spend a fun night with us creating easy wall decor with colors of your choosing. Ages 17 and older. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Comets Kids Club,** Monday, Jan. 23, 4-4:45 p.m. Food and fun, what beats that? Comets Kids Club will have a special themed snack and craft. Kids will love to eat and socialize with their peers. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Monday Book Club,** to be determined, Monday, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.

• **Book Club (third - fifth grade),** Tuesday, Dec. 20, 4 p.m. "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" by Roald Dahl. Pick up your copy while supplies last. Read, then join us for some fun discussion. Registration required.

• **Book Club (third - fifth grade),** Tuesday, Jan. 4, 4 p.m. "Northwind" by Gary Paulson. Pick up your copy of the book starting Tuesday, Dec. 20, while supplies last. Read, then join us for some fun discussion. Registration required.

• **Adult DIY Card Crafting,** Monday, Jan. 30, 6 p.m. Join Jane and Kim in making handmade cards that are fun to create and treasured by the recipients. Make two cards each of four different designs using numerous techniques. There will be a \$5 material fee payable that night. Beginners are welcome. Feel free to bring scissors and adhesive if you have them, and prepare to have a good time. Ages 17 and older. Register at polkcitylibrary.org one month in advance. ■

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HEALTH By Andrea Gustafson

NAVIGATING family and the holidays

The holidays can bring a lot of joy but can also come with a lot of stress. Schedules get busy, to-do lists get long, and family gatherings are inevitable. Despite, often, loving our families, spending more time with them than normal can be challenging. Rather than suffering through and being stressed, here are some tips on navigating the holidays with family.



- **Communicate** – Talk to the people you are spending time with about your concerns/expectations for the get-together and what you are willing to do and not do. Be direct and clear.
- **Set boundaries** – “No” is a complete sentence. We all have limits to how much we can fit into the schedule, and, when it’s full, it’s full. Set boundaries around what you are physically and mentally able to commit to and don’t go past that.
- **Self care** – There is no getting around this time of year being more stressful than normal. Make sure you are taking time to do the things needed for yourself. This can be as simple as making sure you are eating and getting enough sleep. But it’s important keep it up this time of year. ■



Information provided by Andrea Gustafson, LISW, JMG Therapy and Counseling Services, associated with SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, andrea@jmgtherapy.com, 515-777-1209.



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HEALTH By Dr. Jesse Kahnk, OD

A NEW hope for AMD

If you are familiar with age-related macular degeneration (AMD), then you may know there are two forms: wet and dry. However, there is a form of dry AMD called geographic atrophy that causes large blind spots in a person’s central vision with often significant day-to-day impacts like not being able to see faces, drive a car or read easily.

For these patients, we’ve never had great options. Vitamins based on the AREDs (1 and 2) studies have shown some ability to slow down the rate of vision loss in some patients, but we have been otherwise fairly limited. This often means finding ways to maximize what vision we have left (an optometry specialty called Low Vision) rather than bringing back what was lost. However, there is a new class of drugs on the possible horizon. These medications target a part of our immune system called the complement system. There is early evidence these drugs can reduce the size of geographic atrophy in patients.

Nothing is approved yet (the studies are in Priority Review), but I’m excited to see some progress toward giving these patients hope we can make their vision better in the future. ■



Information provided by Dr. Jesse Kahnk, OD, Prairie View Eyecare, 1345 S.W. Park Square Drive, Suite 106, Ankeny, 515-305-2922.

BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

'THE MOST Wonderful Time of the Year'

As I anticipate Christmas, Andy William's song "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" keeps reverberating through my head.

For many, if not most, that song rings true. We anticipate fun, laughter, time spent with family, rejoicing in the Babe in the manger, etc. throughout this Christmas season.

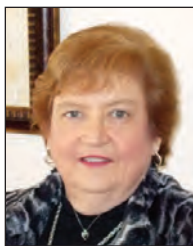
But for others — especially those who have said "good-bye" to a loved one this past year, this Christmas may seem anything but wonderful. Thoughts of an empty place at the table, one less stocking hanging from the mantle, or one less candle being lit at the Christmas Eve service are overwhelming to them.

For those who are facing their first Christmas without a loved one, remember, each person deals with grief in their own way and whatever manner your grief manifests itself, it is OK. Don't try to hide your feelings from others; they are often hurting, too.

Whether this Christmas brings laughter and fun or tears and bittersweet memories, know that others care about you — including those of us here at Highland Memory Gardens.

Regardless of your circumstances, may this Christmas become "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" for you and your family. ■

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



Merry Christmas!

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HEALTH By Sue Hudson

STAY healthy with hydration

Winter is here, and with it comes challenges to staying healthy during the cold and flu season, as well as simply resisting the negative effects of the cold and being inside all day.

Two of the biggest challenges to individual health are proper hydration and sufficient levels of vitamins and minerals in our diets. There are thousands of supplements available, but no matter which you take, they are limited in their efficiency by how the body absorbs them when taken the traditional way.

IV therapy is an alternative method to get the most out of supplemental vitamins and nutrients that we take. Getting germ-fighting vitamins such as Vitamin C and the seasonally needed Vitamin D are easier than ever with an IV drip. Staying healthy with immune boosting therapy is one of the primary advantages of IV drip therapy.

Along with vitamins and nutrients, direct hydration is a benefit of IV therapy. The majority of people exist in a perpetual state of minor dehydration by not getting the recommended amount of water daily. IV hydration helps with that by replacing missing fluids directly into the body at one time.

IV therapy is the next generation of personal health for both proper hydration and ensuring that you are getting all of the vitamins and nutrients that a healthy body needs. ■

Information provided by Sue Hudson, owner, IV Nutrition Ankeny, 2405 S.W. White Birch Drive, Ankeny, 515-686-8400. www.ivnutritionnow.com.



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BUDGETING for the holidays

With the holidays quickly approaching, you're probably either thinking about or have already started Christmas shopping. This year, research experts have predicted the average consumer will spend more than \$800 on holiday gifts. Although it's fun to get in the Christmas spirit of giving, it's also important to know how much you can afford to spend ahead of time. Overspending to make the holidays extra special can result in major post-holiday regrets.



When creating your holiday budget, choose a method that works best for you. Whether it's pen and paper, Excel, Google Sheets or a smartphone app, laying out your budget will help you stay within your limit and prevent impulse buying. Here are some tips to help you start:

Project your income

If your paycheck is the same every two weeks, just double your paycheck for your monthly income. If your pay is irregular, it will be a little more difficult to figure out, but one way would be to look at your pay stubs from this time last year. Also, think of any old gift cards you can use to purchase gifts or additional income you may receive from side gigs.

Make a list of expenses

After you know how much you'll earn, start thinking of your holiday expenses. Review your monthly budget to determine how much extra money you have to spend or where you can cut expenses. You can subtract your normal monthly expenses, such as your mortgage or rent and utility bills, from your projected income to determine how much you'll have to spend on gifting.

Create a shopping list

It's easier to shop when you have everything written down on a list. Create a list including names, budgeted gifting amount, gift idea, and where to purchase. Plan on a little give-and-take when making your list in order to stick to your budget.

Research prices

Making smart purchases requires research. Before buying your gifts, check prices at different stores to ensure you're getting the best price.

Stick to your budget

The last yet most important step in the process is sticking to the budget. Once you've put the time into the first steps, it is crucial you follow through, which takes willpower, but it will be well worth it.

We hope you find these holiday budgeting tips helpful, and we hope you enjoy the season. ■

Information provided by Kelsey Hughes, marketing officer, Raccoon Valley Bank, Adel, Dallas Center, Grimes and Perry, 515-465-3521.

Happy Holidays

FROM OUR STAFF TO YOUR FAMILY

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AFFORDABLE home upgrades for big impact

Home improvement pros and DIYers tout a fresh coat of paint as a favorite among low-cost home upgrades that can make a huge impact. But what else can you do to accessorize and decorate? Sometimes the little things can make a bigger difference than you'd think.



For the bathroom

1. Frame it. Estimated cost: starting around \$100. That edgeless, builder-grade mirror hanging above the bathroom vanity may be prime for an update.
2. Infuse some green. Estimated cost: \$5 and up. Simply adding greenery can liven up bathroom spaces and soften harsh lines from all the heavy fixtures, designers say. Try a statement plant on the floor.
3. Modernize hardware. Estimated cost: hardware starting at about \$2 apiece, faucets for \$200 or less. Just swapping out the faucets and drawer pulls is a small home upgrade that can refresh an outdated bathroom.
4. Soften the lights. Estimated cost: about \$100 or less apiece (\$40 to \$120 per fixture for installation by an electrician). Wall sconces can warm up the bathroom lighting.

For the bedroom

5. Add molding to the walls. Estimated cost: about \$200, including a designer's input. Installing molding on the walls behind the bed is an impressive home upgrade.
6. Decorate with mirrors. Estimated cost: \$150 to \$250. Try a mirror in an unusual shape, like a diamond, hexagon or square silhouette.

For the living room

7. Texturize and accessorize. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$150 to update a few accessories. Designers may add texture by incorporating dressers with fluted designs, chunky knit throws, velvet ottomans, or leather accent chairs.
8. Wallpaper the shelves. Estimated cost: about \$50 for a small roll. For homeowners who may be too timid to jump on the wallpaper comeback trend, try it in small doses and with less commitment (especially when using a removable peel-and-stick type).

For the kitchen

9. Bring in some bling. Estimated cost: starting at \$2 apiece for cabinet hardware, \$60 to \$150 for pendant lighting (extra \$40 to \$120 per fixture for installation by an electrician). Even just changing out one main fixture or series of pendants above a kitchen island can change the whole look of a room instantly without having to renovate the entire kitchen.
10. Dress up the pantry. Estimated cost: starting at \$1 each for baskets and glass jars. Pantries have emerged as a kitchen favorite, so they're a good choice for a home upgrade. "Invest in a label maker and go to town organizing your pantry so everything matches and looks almost decorative or too pretty to take snacks from," Bell says. ■

Article by HouseLogic. Information provided by Bonnie Christensen, broker, RE/MAX Precision, 225 N.W. 18th St., Suite 103, Ankeny, 515-971-9973.

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RECIPE

BEEF up the holiday menu

(Family Features) At this year's holiday gatherings, you can put together a show-stopping menu from the beginning of the party to the final bite with mouthwatering recipes that bring guests back for more. Incorporate beef, a versatile, beloved ingredient that can be used in appetizers, sides and main courses alike.

Consider a holiday favorite from Beef Loving Texans such as a must-have main course like classic beef Wellington. Perfect for a family get-together, this traditional dish combines tender chateaubriand roast with a homemade glaze of earthy mushrooms, red wine and Dijon mustard wrapped in a golden-brown puff pastry. Find more beef-inspired holiday dishes at BeefLovingTexans.com. ■

Classic beef Wellington

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans
Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper, divided
- 1 chateaubriand tenderloin roast
- 8 ounces mushrooms
- 1 large shallot
- 2 tablespoons dry red wine
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- flour
- 1 sheet puff pastry

DIRECTIONS

- In large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1/2 teaspoon oil until hot. Combine salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Press evenly onto all surfaces of roast. Place roast in skillet; brown evenly. Remove roast from skillet.
- Heat oven to 425 F.

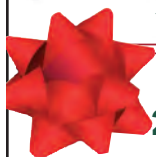
- In food processor, pulse mushrooms and shallot about 10 times until finely chopped. Do not overprocess.
- Place same skillet used for roast over medium-high heat and heat remaining oil until hot. Add mushrooms and shallot; cook 4-6 minutes until tender and all liquid is evaporated, stirring often. Add wine; cook 2-3 minutes until all liquid is evaporated. Stir in mustard, thyme and remaining pepper. Cook 2-3 minutes. Remove from skillet to medium bowl; cool.
- Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and place in oven. On lightly floured cutting board, unfold pastry dough. Roll pastry out to 12-by-9-inch rectangle; lay dough with shortest edge toward you. Spread mushroom mixture onto pastry dough, leaving 1/2-inch border around edges. Place roast in center of mushrooms. Fold



pastry dough neatly around roast, stretching dough if necessary. Cut off excess pastry dough; press to seal overlapping edges.

- Remove baking sheet from oven and dust lightly with flour. Place pastry-wrapped roast, seam-side down, on baking sheet. Cut four 2-inch vents in top of pastry.
- Bake 35-50 minutes, or until golden brown and instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 135 F for medium-rare or 150 F for medium. Transfer roast to carving board. Let stand 10 minutes. Temperature will rise about 10 F to reach 145 F for medium-rare or 160 F for medium.
- Carve into slices and serve.

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ADVICE can help when making charitable gifts

Now that it's the holiday season, gifts are probably on your mind — and you might intend for some of those gifts to go to charities. Although your intentions are good, you could be shortchanging both your recipients and yourself with your method of giving. But with some guidance, you can make choices that work well for you and those charitable groups you support.



Of course, you could simply give money to these groups. However, by donating other types of assets, can you increase the value of your gift and gain greater tax benefits, too?

It's certainly possible, but your ability to gain any tax advantages depends somewhat on whether or not you can itemize deductions on your tax return. Due to legislation passed a few years ago that significantly increased the standard deduction, many people may no longer be itemizing. But if you still itemize, you can generally deduct up to 60% of your adjusted gross income for cash donations to IRS-qualified charities.

Another contribution strategy involves donating other assets, such as stocks. You could donate stocks directly to a charitable group, but you might gain more benefits by making an irrevocable contribution to a donor-advised fund (DAF). Again, assuming you can itemize, you can deduct the full fair-market value of the asset, up to 30% of your adjusted gross income, and your contributions can be invested in mutual funds or similar vehicles. The contributions have the opportunity for growth, and distributions to the charity are tax-free. You can then decide, on your own timetable, which IRS-qualified charitable groups you would like to receive the money. Furthermore, if you donate stocks that have risen in value, you won't incur potential capital gains taxes that you would have when you eventually sold the stocks. These taxes can be considerable, especially if you've held the stocks for a long time. (You'll want to consult with your tax advisor on how charitable gifts can affect your taxes, especially if you're thinking of using a donor-advised fund.)

These charitable donation methods are not secrets, and they are available to many people — you don't have to be wealthy to employ them. Yet, here's an interesting statistic: Those who work with a financial advisor on charitable strategies are more than three times as likely to donate non-cash assets such as stocks than those who contribute to charities but don't work with an advisor, according to an August 2022 survey from financial services firm Edward Jones and Morning Consult, a global data intelligence company. These findings suggest that many more people could be taking advantage of tax-smart charitable giving moves — if only they had some help or guidance.

Also, by getting some professional financial assistance, you may find it easier to implement your charitable giving decisions within your overall financial strategy, which is designed to help you meet all your important long-term goals, such as achieving a comfortable retirement.

Your instinct to help support charitable groups is a worthy one — and by getting some help, you can turn this impulse into actions that may work to everyone's benefit. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information was provided by Kyle Matzen, AAMS, 407 W. Bridge Road, Suite 7, Polk City, 515-984-6073.

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Merry Christmas

Enjoy the holiday season with friends and family!



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From our Family to yours, have a safe and wonderful Christmas and New Year!



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DECADE of living in Polk City

Ackerman family deeply embedded in community

Rachel and Nick Ackerman and their family were eating lunch at Reising Sun Café on the Square in Polk City when they made the decision to move to town.

They bought their home in July 2013 and have lived there ever since.

“When we moved, we had two little boys, ages 4 and 2, and we were expecting our third,” Rachel Ackerman says. “Nick really wanted to look for an acreage somewhere, but with being a stay-at-home mom, not really knowing anyone in the area and having two little kids with a third on the way, I wanted to live in town.”

The couple looked at several houses in the Des Moines metro but ultimately chose the first one they looked at in Polk City.

“There were a lot of young families with kids in the neighborhood, which is exactly what I wanted,” Ackerman says.

Today, the neighborhood is her favorite part of where they live.

“Several of our neighbors have become some of our best friends, and the same goes for our boys,” she says. “We have a big party together every summer, have done Adopt-a-Family/wine nights, ugly sweater parties, birthday parties, girls’ weekends, pool parties, vacations and so much more.

“We have experienced life with them the last nine and a half years: the highest of highs and the lowest of lows,” she continues. “I know not everyone gets to experience a neighborhood like this, so I do not take it for granted.”

The Ackermans also greatly appreciate the Polk City community at large. They enjoy attending events like Four Seasons Fest and Light Up Polk City. Ackerman in particular enjoys supporting local small businesses and entrepreneurs.



Rachel and Nick Ackerman and their three boys find many ways to be involved with the community they have called home for more than nine years now.

“I feel like the Polk City community is really great about this as well,” she says. “The North Polk Community School District is also amazing. I started para subbing this year and love having the opportunity to help out in the elementary schools.”

Ackerman is also an active member of the North Polk School Foundation and PTA, through which she helps run the book fair, as well as coordinates an Angel Tree at Papa’s Pizzeria and Polk City Nutrition. Nick is heavily involved with the Comet Wrestling Club and has helped grow the program over the past few years. The couple’s three boys stay busy with sports activities as well.

“Polk City is such a special community with some of the most amazing people,” Ackerman sums up. “I honestly did not want to move nine and a half years ago, but now I cannot imagine raising our boys and doing life anywhere else.” ■



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Food and goods drive

Through Dec. 21
Fire/Police Department
112 N. Third St.

The Polk City Fire Department and Police Department are holding a food and goods drive for the NP Comet Cupboard.

Suggestions for food item donations include condiments, ramen, soups, canned fruits and vegetables, and Hamburger Helper, along with other nonperishables.

Goods needed include laundry detergent, soaps, razors, cat and dog food, toilet paper and other hygiene items.

Donations can be dropped off in the lobby of the Fire/Police Department through Dec. 21. Those who donate can drop their phone number in the bucket provided for a chance to win either a ride in a police car or a fire truck.



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• JOLLY HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Adventureland Park, 3300 Adventureland Drive, Altoona
jollyholidaylights.org

• FIRST CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE

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firstchurchdsm.org

• SANTA'S ROCK N LIGHTS

Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale
LHF.org

• HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION

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valleyjunction.com

• LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS

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windsorheightsfoundation.org

• WINTER WONDERLIGHTS

Uptown Ankeny, 715 W. First St., Ankeny
uptownankeny.org

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Dec. 9-18
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This classic is presented by Iowa Stage Theatre Company. dmpa.org

• 'A Very Merry Tallgrass Holiday'

Dec. 16-18
Tallgrass Theatre Company, 2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines
This collaboration with Seedlings Children's Theatre features scripts from Drama Notebook's collection of scripts for kids and teens.
tallgrasstheatre.org

• 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical'

Thursday, Dec. 22, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
Come see all of your favorite characters including Santa and Mrs. Claus, Hermey the Elf, the Abominable Snow Monster, Clarice, Yukon Cornelius and, of course, Rudolph. dmpa.org

• Mannheim Steamroller Christmas

Dec. 23, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

A holiday favorite returns. dmpa.org

• New Year's Eve Pops: Frank & The Great Ladies of Song

Saturday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.
Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

The Des Moines Symphony performs.
dmsymphony.org

• Holiday Hullabaloo

Through Dec. 31, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. general admission and 7-11 p.m. adults only
Horizon Events Center, 2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive

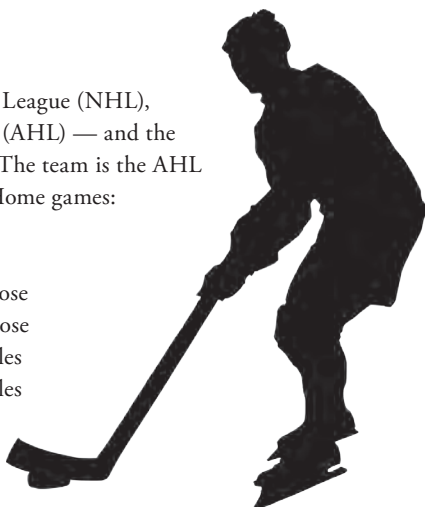
The 2022 Holiday Hullabaloo, a benefit for Dorothy's House, is an immersive, family-friendly holiday experience that will surprise and delight guests this holiday season. Enjoy a variety of activities, entertainment and festivities that will allow you to create some fun holiday hullabaloo and memories. Evenings are adults only and will feature live music in the Ice Bar. Dec. 31 will be the Silver Bell Soiree New Years Eve Party with live music by the Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. Ticket are available at <https://holidayhullabaloo.eventbrite.com>.

Iowa Wild

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowawild.com

Just one step below the National Hockey League (NHL), you'll find the American Hockey League (AHL) — and the Iowa Wild professional ice hockey team. The team is the AHL affiliate of the NHL's Minnesota Wild. Home games:

- Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. vs. Manitoba Moose
- Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Manitoba Moose
- Dec. 28 at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado Eagles
- Dec. 30 at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado Eagles



EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Des Moines Buccaneers

Buccaneer Arena
7201 Hickman Road, Urbandale
bucshockey.com

The Bucs are a member of the United States Hockey League (USHL), the only Tier 1 Junior Hockey League in the country. Home games:

- Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. vs. Waterloo Black Hawks
- Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. vs. Sioux City Musketeers



Iowa Wolves

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowa.gleague.nba.com

Des Moines' pro basketball team plays in the Western Conference of the NBA G League. They were known as the Iowa Energy until their purchase by the Minnesota Timberwolves in 2017. Home games:

- Dec. 29 at 7 p.m. vs. Raptors 905
- Dec. 31 at 2 p.m. vs. Raptors 905
- Jan. 1 at 2 p.m. vs. Texas Legends



Drake basketball

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines
godrakebulldogs.com

The Drake University Bulldogs compete in NCAA Division-1 basketball in the Missouri Valley Conference.

Men's home games:

- Dec. 22 vs. St. Ambrose

Women's home games:

- Dec. 18 vs. Southwest Baptist ■

OUT & ABOUT

GROUNDBREAKING ceremony



Home State Bank held a groundbreaking ceremony for their new Polk City branch location on Oct. 27.

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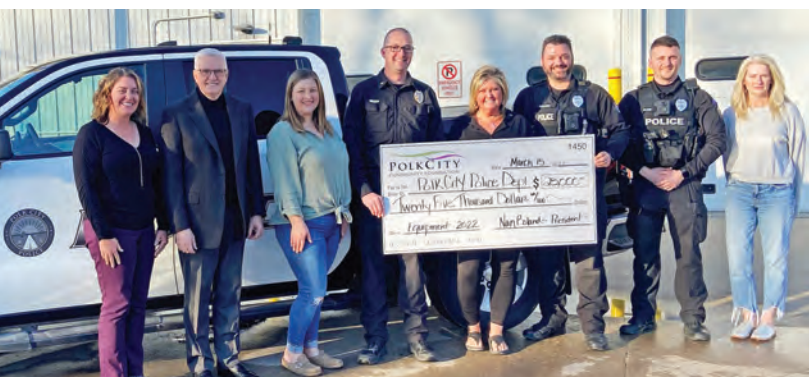
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WINTER Wonderland Gala

PCC Foundation raises funds for community.



The Polk City Police Department accepts a check from the Polk City Community Foundation following the 2022 Winter Wonderland Gala.



The Polk City Fire Department accepts a check from the Polk City Community Foundation following the 2022 Winter Wonderland Gala.

The Polk City Community Foundation (PCCF) is inviting the community to attend a fundraising gala aimed at supporting and improving the quality of life in Polk City.

The Winter Wonderland Gala will be held on Jan. 14 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. The PCCF, along with other partners, is hosting the second annual event.

For the 2022 event, the PCCF set a lofty goal of raising \$50,000. It exceeded that amount, raising \$125,000. Nan Boland, president of the PCCF board, was thrilled with the amount.

“We were able to write checks to the fire and police departments, which needed new equipment,” she explains. “Additionally, we gave the park a special needs swing and a refrigerator for the Comet Cupboard.”

The PCCF was formed in 2008 as an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. The Foundation was formed to assist in improving the

quality of life in Polk City and surrounding communities through philanthropy. PCCF provides opportunities for donors to direct their donations to the projects important to them. This is accomplished by raising money through donations, planned giving, grants and fundraising.

In addition to Nan Boland, current board members include Kelly Hoffmeier, vice president; Carolyn Ohlfest, treasurer; Jenny Sands, secretary; Susie Sheldahl, Emily Feldman, John Amato, Molly Sheldahl and Michelle Blattel.

The last gala benefitted three nonprofits. This year, PCCF board members discussed working with all the Polk City nonprofits, including the Polk City Fire Fighters Association, Polk City Police Officers Association, Polk City Women, Polk City Friends of the Library, Polk City Kiwanis and Polk City Friends of the Park.

“This year, we’re working with six

nonprofits, but with one goal in mind — Polk City,” says Boland.

Boland says that Polk City is a small but rapidly growing, wonderful community.

“We have seen tremendous growth on the residential side; however, we struggle with commercial, business and industrial growth, as well as job creation.”

Boland believes Polk City will continue to grow in the future, much like surrounding communities. The goal of the foundation is to help supplement additional costs requested by nonprofit partners, identifying three target goals as part of their fundraising efforts: 1. fire and police, 2. arts and beautification and 3. children in the community.

This year’s goal is to raise \$100,000. The gala includes an announcement about the Person of the Year, silent auction, program, dinner and live auction. Tickets cost \$100 each and are available at www.gopolkcitcity.com/foundation. ■

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3rd St south to 52nd Ave, then east to the church

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Provided as a community service by this civic minded publication and the Association of Community Publishers

AFUE: Why it should matter to you

The terminology for HVAC (heating, venting and air conditioning) can be confusing, and most people have no desire to understand them. But there are a few that you should learn and pay attention to, such as AFUE.

AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) is an efficiency rating that's required by the Federal Trade Commission to be labeled on forced air furnaces. Furnaces are used to blow the air throughout our home's duct work regardless of whether the thermostat is set to "Heat" or "Cool" or "Fan," but the AFUE rating only applies to the furnace's heating ability.

So why is this important to you? It's important because the higher the AFUE rating, the lower your fuel costs. For example, if your AFUE rating reads 98%, your system uses 98% of its fuel for heat, while 2% gets lost. An older furnace with an AFUE rating of 80 will turn 80% of its fuel into usable heat, which, in turn, means that 20% of its fuel is lost.

The average life expectancy of a heating and cooling system is about 15-20 years. With so many advancements in efficiency, even a 10-year-old system could be due for an upgrade. Each year, your system's AFUE rating can decline about 5% if it is not properly maintained. With scheduled routine annual maintenance for your system, you will have better chances of extending the life of your HVAC system and protecting your investment.

Do you know what the AFUE for your current furnace is? You can find your furnace's AFUE rating on the bright yellow EnergyGuide label that was placed on your furnace by the manufacturer. If you have an older furnace with an AFUE of 70%, then upgrading to an AFUE of 90% could save you around \$20 for every \$100 that you would normally spend.

High-efficiency furnaces are more of an investment when compared to mid-efficiency systems, but, when we factor in that 15-year life span, the money saved on energy costs will be worth it in the long run — especially because Iowa winters can be brutally cold.

Hopefully, you now have a good understanding of what AFUE is and why it's important, especially when considering upgrading your HVAC system. If you still have questions or are ready to learn more about which high-efficiency furnaces are available for your home, contact your local trusted heating and cooling company. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.



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OUT & ABOUT

CHAMBER Lunch

The Polk City Chamber of Commerce held its monthly lunch at Luana Savings Bank on Nov. 16.



Brandon Converse and Steve Karsjen



Roxana Currie and Rose Taylor



Corey Morrison, Heather Raver and Jamie Dobson



Rob Cupp, Monica Converse and Rich Leopold



Eric Hockenberry and Michael Kline



Jessica Faue and Jason Thraen



Logan Albaugh, Mackenzie Cichon, Stephanie Kelsick, Jane Jackson, Seth Bonifas and Courtney Joint

LIGHTING of the Square

Polk City celebrated the traditional Lighting of the Square ceremony on Dec. 2. Photos by Jeff Walters



OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

Polk City Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Kimberley Development and Benchmark Builders on Dec. 1.



Polk City Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Kimberley Development and Benchmark Builders on Dec. 1.



Greg Steward, Ou Meksay and Susie Sheldahl



Ben Collette and Brett Baker



TJ Jennings and Chase Carrick



Kimberley Jackman and Brandon Converse



Steve Karsjen and Jordan Kramer



Brian Nelson and Kim Nelson

LIGHTING of the Square

Polk City celebrated the traditional Lighting of the Square ceremony on Dec. 2. Photos by Jeff Walters



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