NORWALK
Living
NOVEMBER 2026



Food INSECURITY

Local organizations help provide for residents' needs

Meet Kim Casey
EDUCATION

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RECIPE

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As we enter the holiday season, many of us are thinking about Thanksgiving dinners, family gatherings and the comfort of sharing a good meal. But for far too many of our neighbors, the question is not what to serve for dinner. It is whether there will be dinner at all.

Food insecurity is not confined to big cities or struggling neighborhoods. It exists in our suburbs, including communities like this one, and in rural towns across Iowa. It affects children, working families, older adults and people who never imagined they would need help putting food on the table.

The numbers are sobering. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 18.3 million American households — 13.7% of all households — experienced food insecurity at some point in 2024. That means millions of families struggled to consistently afford enough food. Among households with children, 6.7 million experienced food insecurity that year. And Feeding America estimates that nearly one in five children nationwide faced food insecurity in 2023.

The challenge becomes even greater when public assistance is reduced or becomes more difficult to access. Changes to nutrition assistance programs, tighter eligibility requirements and funding pressures can leave vulnerable households with fewer options. Food banks and local pantries work tirelessly to fill the gaps, but they cannot shoulder the entire burden alone.

That is why the individuals and organizations working to combat hunger deserve our heartfelt gratitude. Food pantry volunteers, food bank employees, school meal coordinators, faith communities, civic groups, local businesses and generous donors make a meaningful difference every day. They give their time, resources and compassion to help ensure that a neighbor's hardship does not become a family's crisis.

Their work is particularly important during the holidays, when the contrast between abundance and need can feel especially sharp. A holiday meal can provide more than nourishment. It can offer comfort, dignity and a sense of belonging. But hunger doesn't disappear when the decorations come down, and neither should our commitment to addressing it. ■



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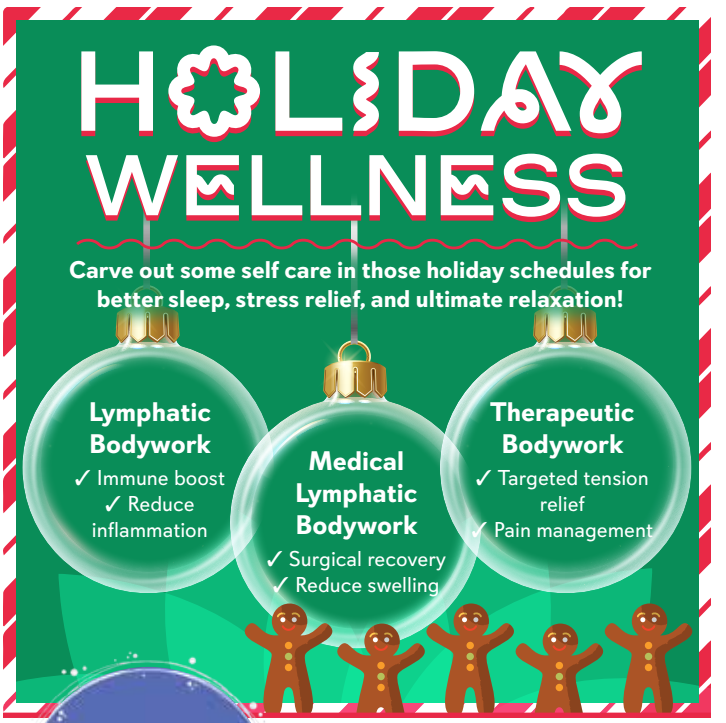
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Food INSECURITY

Local organizations help provide for residents' needs

By Rachel Harrington

Food insecurity can affect people at every stage of life, from children and working families to seniors trying to balance the cost of food and other everyday necessities. In Warren County, several organizations are working to meet those needs. Their approaches may differ, but their missions share a common purpose: making sure no one has to face hunger alone.

Norwalk High School seniors and National Honor Society members Kaitlin Smith and Piper Weldon volunteer in the food pantry at their school.

Norwalk Area Ministerial Association (NAMA)

According to the Norwalk Area Ministerial Association (NAMA), Norwalk's only human services organization, food insecurity is more prevalent than many residents realize. Angie Croll, NAMA's executive director, said she often encounters people in Norwalk who acknowledge that food insecurity is a problem but believe it does not exist in their community.

NAMA operates a food pantry for residents of the Norwalk Community School District every Thursday from 2-7 p.m. at New Life Lutheran Church. On average, the pantry has served 111 households each week this year. Croll said those numbers are expected to increase because the final months of the year historically bring higher demand.

When families contact NAMA for assistance and guidance, one of the first questions staff members ask is whether they are using the food pantry and community refrigerators.

"I don't know that many people realize they are food insecure. It is more a worry about their next bills and how they will pay rent or utilities. We try to help people navigate and effectively use the resources available, including SNAP, food pantries and community fridges to help them use their income efficiently," Jessica Lewis, NAMA associate director, said.

In addition to the food pantry, NAMA coordinates about 25 Food Rescue volunteers who collect food three days a week for four community refrigerators at local locations. Three refrigerators are in the community rooms of low-income apartment complexes, and the fourth is at the Norwalk Easter Public Library. The food is available to anyone who needs it.

During the summer, NAMA also provides free lunches and snack bags every Friday through its Lunch in the Park program.

"This fills the gap for those kids who relied on the school breakfast and lunch," Croll said.

For the holidays this year, NAMA is trying something new. The organization is asking community members to donate Thanksgiving side-dish bags containing two cans of green beans, a can of cream of mushroom soup, a can of fried onions, a family-size packet of instant mashed potatoes, a packet of gravy mix, a Jiffy pie crust mix and a can of fruit pie filling. The bags will be distributed Nov. 19 at the food pantry along with turkeys to help families prepare a complete holiday meal.



Leanne Smith, Barb McNulty, Sue Crum, Donna Benson, Dave Hanson, Jerry Ludtke and Julia Johns volunteer at the Norwalk Area Ministerial Association food pantry.

Norwalk High School Food Pantry

Norwalk High School has operated a school-based food pantry for the past four years in partnership with the Food Bank of Iowa. Members of the school's National Honor Society staff the pantry, taking on a variety of responsibilities. One of their most important roles is welcoming visitors and helping them select items.

"The way it exists now is not the way it started," Michelle Flores, a teacher who has served as the Honor Society adviser for the past two years, said. "It initially started as a food pantry specifically for students and families across the district. Then we realized there was actually a broader need in our community. Sometimes the Norwalk Area Ministerial Association will point people in our direction who have an immediate need, and some of the churches promote our pantry to their members. We were getting requests from people who maybe don't necessarily have kids at school, and it was really hard to say no when they clearly were in need. So, we expanded the way we outreach and expanded the number of people who can come in and access the pantry."

When the school pantry transitioned to its current format, participation was initially slow. Over time, however, a consistent group of visitors began coming each week.

Flores said she enjoys seeing familiar faces because regular visits allow students to build relationships with families.

"If a family doesn't come in for a week or two, the students notice and wonder what happened to them, hoping they will come back," Flores said. "It has been fun to see the students develop those relationships with people they would not ordinarily run into."

The pantry also sees increased use during certain times of the year. Demand rises in November and December during the holiday season and in March around spring break, when families may not have access to school meals.

"When school calendar vacations come up, the usage increases, too," Flores said. "It is usually slow in August as we get started, but, once we get going, we have a pretty consistent group of people."

The school pantry is smaller than organizations such as NAMA, and its inventory depends largely on what the Food Bank of Iowa has available. Common staples include canned vegetables, canned fruit, pasta, rice and cereal. When available, the pantry also stocks refrigerated and frozen items, such as meat and eggs.

Personal care products, including deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste, are available, too. Occasionally, the pantry receives household supplies, such as dishwasher tablets.

Although the Food Bank of Iowa is the pantry's primary supplier, school staff members sometimes contribute cash donations or bring in surplus produce from their home gardens.

This year, National Honor Society members have not yet organized a food drive, but they are contributing to NAMA's effort to provide Thanksgiving side-dish bags to families.

"We, as a group, have pledged to provide materials for five sides bags. If community members want to contribute to the pantry, they



Rachel Klein, director of Helping Hand of Warren County, said she has seen a steady increase in the number of people facing food insecurity.



Norwalk Area Ministerial Association supplies community refrigerators such as the one at Norwalk Easter Public Library.

are welcome to drop things off at the school office any time the school is open or come in on a Wednesday afternoon when the pantry is open. Monetary donations are also welcome," Flores said.

Helping Hand of Warren County

At Helping Hand of Warren County, 109 E. Clinton Ave., Indianola, food insecurity is an increasingly visible concern.

Rachel Klein, director of Helping Hand of Warren County, has noticed food insecurity becoming a greater issue since 2022. The organization's food pantry serves hundreds of families from across Warren County each year.

"Last year in October, we served 452 families in our food pantry section," she said. "October is traditionally our busiest month."

Helping Hand aims to provide a week's worth of groceries once a month to individuals and families. For those who need additional assistance after their monthly visit, the organization offers a program called Anytime Food.

"Anytime Food is whatever I have a lot of at the moment," Klein said. "It might not be fancy, but I won't ever turn anyone away with nothing."

Helping Hand also participates in a rescue food program. The organization receives food daily from the Indianola Hy-Vee, weekly from Indianola's Fareway and Walmart, and twice a week from Aldi on the south side of Des Moines and the Bevington Maverik gas station.

Klein divides pantry visitors into three age groups: children, adults ages 18-55, and adults ages 55 and older. Since 2022, she has noticed that many of those seeking assistance are working to make ends meet, particularly young families and working professionals.

"Since 2022, the majority of people who come in seem to be those who are holding on by the skin of their teeth, and most of them are young families and working professionals," she said. "There are a lot of misconstrued ideas of who uses food pantries. It is definitely mostly working families that visit us. I tell them, if they ever have to choose between gas to get to work and food to eat, pick gas, because I can help with food."

Klein said the community does a wonderful job of rallying to help meet neighbors' needs through monetary and food donations.

"My job can be hard because I am constantly seeing the deep need, but it is rewarding because I get to see our community take care of each other," she said.

Many organizations hold food drives to benefit Helping Hand, along with drives for personal care products and feminine hygiene items. When groups ask what they can contribute, Klein looks for creative ways to involve them.

"We always need food items like canned chicken or other proteins, Spaghetti-O's, canned soup, peanut butter and jelly, and fruit as well as household items like dish soap," she said.

Helping Hand also provides additional food assistance to families with children during summer breaks and extended school holidays.

"We try to send our families home with snack bags for their kids to eat that don't require a stove or an oven," Klein said.

During November and December, pantry visitors can take home extra items to help with holiday meals, including a sweet and a savory option each month.

Throughout its work, Helping Hand aims to make people feel welcome and supported.

"Our goal is to change the way people feel when they come in and when they leave, free of embarrassment or shame and overwhelmed with love and kindness," Klein said.

To receive assistance, individuals must be Warren County residents. Monetary and food donations are welcome, and the organization also collects Hy-Vee receipts. For every $100,000 in receipts collected, Hy-Vee makes a monetary donation to Helping Hand.

A community that cares

These local organizations demonstrate how addressing food insecurity can take many forms. They rely on volunteers, donations, partnerships and the willingness to recognize that hunger can affect people from all walks of life. Whether someone needs groceries for the week, a meal for the family or a few essentials to get through the month, Warren County organizations are working toward the same goal: ensuring neighbors have access to food and the support they need. ■

city of norwalk newsletter

NOVEMBER 2026

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MAYOR'S MOMENT



Tom Phillips, Mayor

As we head into November, I want to take a moment to thank everyone for making Norwalk such a great place to live. One of the best things about our community is how much we look out for one another—especially when it comes to keeping our families safe.

Assistance Available As we approach this season of giving, there are two items I'd like to bring to everyone's attention.

The first is, if you find yourself struggling financially this season, please know there are resources available to help you put food on your table, keep a roof over your head, and keep you warm. The following are a few of the resources available:

- **Norwalk Food Pantry**: operated by the Norwalk Ministerial Association, is located at New Life Lutheran Church, at the corner of Highway 28 and Wakonda Drive. The food pantry is open on Thursdays from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm. For more information, call 515-285-5965.

SCAN TO READ THE FULL MAYOR'S MOMENT



Give the gift of local this season!

City State Bank Norwalk Fieldhouse memberships make the perfect gift.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT!



Pedro Leyva, Building Inspector

The City of Norwalk is excited to spotlight Pedro Leyva, one of two Building Inspectors in the Community Development Department! Since joining the City in July 2024, Pedro has been helping ensure Norwalk's homes and buildings are safe, up to code, and built to last.

From inspecting new homes and remodeling projects to conducting rental inspections and addressing code violations, Pedro's days are anything but predictable. He enjoys the variety and takes pride in knowing his work helps protect the safety and well-being of Norwalk residents.

One of Pedro's favorite experiences with the City was inspecting the homes featured in the 2026 HomeShowExpo. Watching those projects transform from holes in the ground into beautiful, impressive homes was especially rewarding—and gave him a front-row seat to some pretty incredible construction!

Outside of work, Pedro enjoys spending time with his wife, Kennedy, and their two dogs, Zeus and Willow. He also enjoys golfing, playing slowpitch softball, cheering on the New York Yankees, and attending country music concerts.

A fun fact coworkers may not know is that Pedro is fluent in Spanish—he can read, write, and speak the language!

The best advice Pedro has ever received is, "One bad hour doesn't determine the other 23 hours in a day. Always keep a positive mindset." It's a great reminder that a little perspective and positivity can go a long way.

Recycle Your Holiday Lights

Recycle your old or unused holiday lights. **Bring the strands to the collection box in the library's lobby** from November 9th through January 30th. Metro Waste Authority will recycle them.



Library Closed Schedule

November 11 - Veteran's Day
November 25 @ 5pm
November 26 & 27 - Thanksgiving
Thank you for your understanding!

IMPORTANT LINKS FOR NORWALK!

City State Bank Norwalk Fieldhouse
View amenities, hours, rates and more.

DASH Tykes Basketball
Ages 2-5 by date of program

Senior Mahjong Meet-Up
Wednesdays 10am-12pm at Fieldhouse

Adult Women's Winter Volleyball League
Register by December 20

Winter Adult Fitness Programs

norwalk EASTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

See what is happening at the public library!

By Rachel Harrington

NORWALK Santa brings joy to community

Guthrie creates nonprofit to spread holiday cheer.

What began as a friend helping a friend has grown into a passion for bringing joy to the children of Norwalk for Tom Guthrie. Guthrie was initially asked to help a friend who wanted to adopt a couple of families for Christmas and provide them with gifts.

"I posted on Facebook asking for help with the families he had in mind," he recalled. "Word got around town and produced a lot of help."

Encouraged by the positive experience and the community's generous response, Guthrie wanted to continue helping those in need. He started Norwalk Santa on Facebook 10 years ago, and, two years ago, the organization became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Norwalk Santa has four officers and two additional board members, with Guthrie serving as its founding member. Largely through the Norwalk Santa Facebook page, the group learns about families in need. Throughout the year, members work with other community members to collect items and distribute them to those who can use them.

"If someone has an item they don't want anymore and would rather it go to someone in need instead of selling it, they can contact me and I'll post it on my Facebook page. We usually find someone who can use it," Guthrie explained.



Jason Siemens, Edward Jones, presents Norwalk Santa Tom Guthrie with the Neighbor Spotlight certificate.

In the organization's early days, finding families in need was its biggest challenge. Guthrie said many families needed assistance but didn't realize their participation would remain anonymous, making them hesitant to ask for help. Now, after a decade of service and growing awareness of how the program works, more families are participating.

When an apartment fire occurred in Norwalk this summer, many people donated clothing and household items through Norwalk Santa to benefit the victims.

"We had a ton of people donate clothing and different household items," Guthrie said. "Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk was kind enough to allow us use of their showroom to collect donations. There was basically a pile of so much stuff that we had to donate some of it to the Salvation Army."

While Norwalk Santa helps families throughout the year, the organization, as its name suggests, dedicates considerable time and effort to helping those in need during the holiday season.

"We have a web page for our Christmas adoptions," Guthrie said. "Everything is done anonymously. We will create a post with a family number as well as a letter from each child. For example, one child might be called 6B instead of their given name. Their needs and wants are listed in the post, as well as something that is of special interest to them or something they really want."

Guthrie said people often adopt entire families, but those who cannot afford to do so can choose to sponsor individual children instead.

Once again, Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk will sponsor Norwalk Santa by providing space inside the dealership for donation boxes.

"This year, we have the donation drop-off set for Dec. 19," Guthrie said. "Gregg Young has a drive-thru service lane in the service department. We will be set up there. Donors can drive in, tell us what family number they are dropping off for, and we will get it to the right place."

Over the years, Guthrie has had many memorable experiences as a Norwalk Santa.

"Once we were asked to help a sick little boy who wasn't expected to live to be very old," he recalled. "I delivered gifts to his house for him and his big brother. I got to see the smile on his face. He died within that next year. I will always remember that smile on his face — and his family especially. You don't forget things like that."

Guthrie remains committed to the spirit behind Norwalk Santa. Volunteering fills him and others with the spirit of Christmas and giving, while helping those in need strengthens everyone's sense of gratitude. He is especially thankful for the organization's officers and board members, along with the many community volunteers and elves who give their time and resources to help others. ■

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EJB-19325-A-E-DA-4 AECSPAD

By Linda Foster

NAVIGATING the holidays with a loved one



The holidays will be here before we know it, and many families are already making plans. The season brings joy and cherished traditions, but it can also bring challenges when a loved one is aging or living with memory loss, limited mobility or other health concerns. For families with a parent or spouse in assisted living, a little planning now can make the months ahead much easier.

Start by being flexible. Traditions that have lasted for decades may need to change, and that is alright. Instead of recreating every detail, focus on the moments that matter most. A smaller gathering, a shorter visit or a celebration earlier in the day, when your loved one has the most energy, can make the experience far more enjoyable for everyone.

If your loved one lives in an assisted living community, ask about holiday events early. Many communities host meals, performances and family gatherings, and joining one can be easier than traveling. If you plan to bring your loved one home, think through the logistics first: transportation, accessibility, medication schedules and a place to rest.

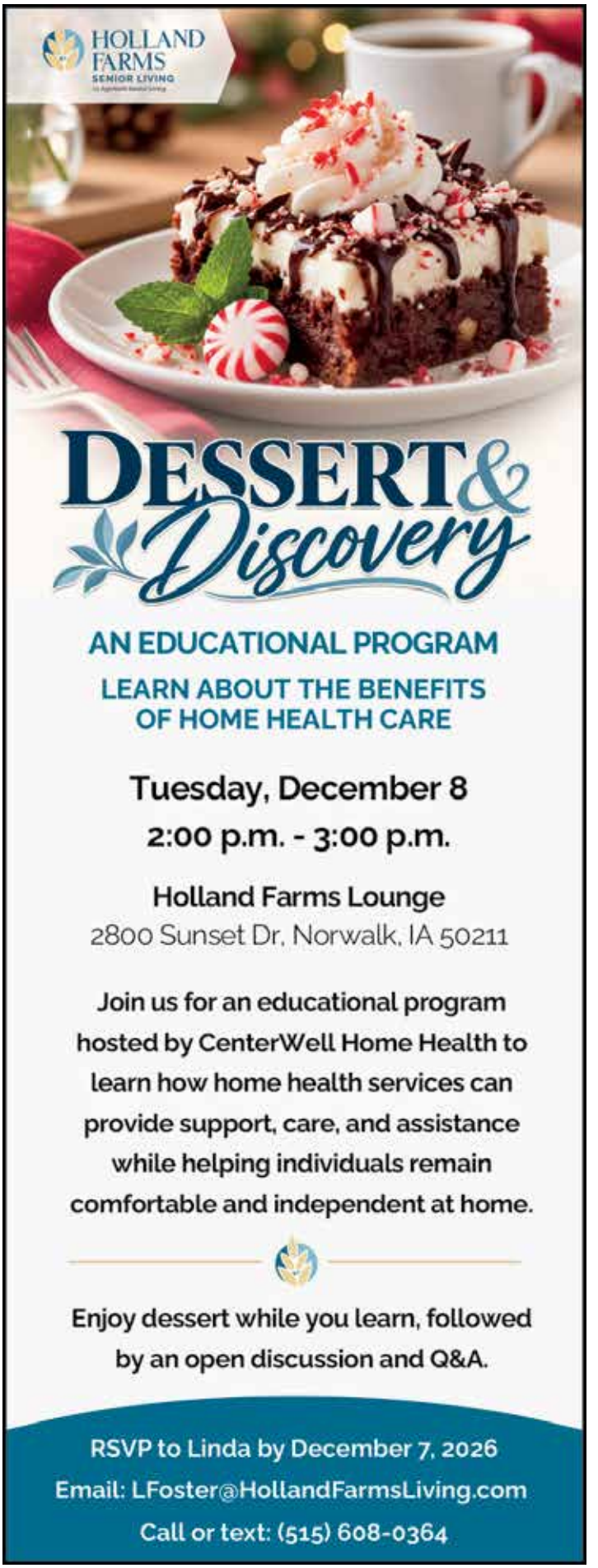
Keep in mind that too much stimulation can be overwhelming. Crowds, loud music and packed schedules may increase confusion or anxiety, especially for someone living with dementia. A quiet room for breaks and fewer activities in a single day can help keep stress low.

Including your loved one in preparations can also give them a sense of purpose. Decorating cookies, sorting through old photo albums, wrapping gifts or setting the table all encourage conversation and invite memories. Those small moments often become the ones families treasure most.

Caregivers carry extra weight this time of year. It is easy to become so focused on a perfect celebration that you forget to take care of yourself. Accept help when it is offered, divide tasks among family members and give yourself permission to simplify. Your well-being matters just as much as that of the person you are caring for.

The holidays may not look the way they did in years past, and that is OK. Traditions change as our loved ones age, but love, laughter and connection do not have to. Often the most memorable moments are the quiet ones: a shared smile, a favorite story retold, an afternoon spent simply being together. With patience, realistic expectations and a willingness to adapt, families can find joy. The greatest tradition is not a perfectly decorated home or an elaborate meal. It is the people gathered around the table. ■

Information provided by Holland Farms, 2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, IA 50211, www.hollandfarmsliving.com, 515-608-0364.



RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

A FAMILY dinner classic for cooler days



Each week we have the family over for dinner, and I love finding meals that feel a little more special simply because everyone is gathered around the table. As the weather starts to cool, I naturally gravitate toward those hearty, comforting recipes that fill the kitchen with wonderful smells and make everyone want to linger a little longer.

Classic Stuffed Peppers are one of those meals. Colorful bell peppers are filled with a savory mixture of seasoned ground beef, rice, tomatoes and cheese, then baked until everything is hot, bubbly and tender. It's the kind of old-fashioned comfort food that doesn't need much fuss — and it's easy to make enough to feed a hungry group.

There's something about stuffed peppers that reminds me of the kind of meals we grew up with: simple ingredients, familiar flavors and a dish that comes out of the oven ready to share. I also like that they can be prepared ahead of time, which makes them especially handy when company is coming.

Served with a simple salad or some crusty bread, stuffed peppers make a satisfying dinner without requiring a lot of extras. And, of course, having the family around the table is the best part. Enjoy! ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

Classic Stuffed Peppers

INGREDIENTS:

- 4-6 bell peppers, use any color — green, yellow, red, orange
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound ground beef (or turkey)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic chopped
- 14.5 ounces chopped tomatoes
- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- Salt and pepper to taste



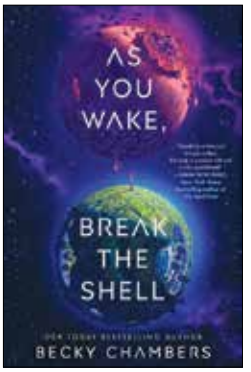
DIRECTIONS:

- Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Bring a pot of water (enough to cover the bell peppers) to a boil. Wash peppers, cut off the tops and clean out the insides. Chop tops. Blanch large peppers 5 minutes to slightly soften. Set the softened peppers into a lightly oiled baking dish. Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat and add the onions and chopped pepper tops. Cook for 5 minutes to soften. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute. Add ground beef. When beef is cooked, add tomatoes, tomato sauce, seasonings and cooked rice. Stir together and remove from heat. Stir in half of the shredded cheese. Stuff each pepper with the meat filling mixture. Top each pepper with the remaining shredded cheese. Roast the stuffed peppers for 15-20 minutes or until the peppers are tender to your preference, and the cheese is nice and bubbly.



Courtesy of Beaverdale Books

'As You Wake, Break the Shell'



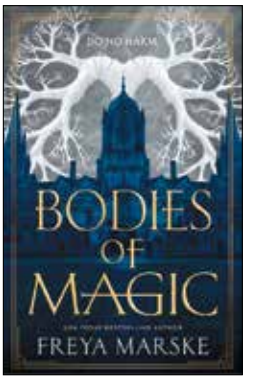
By Becky Chambers
10/13/26
480 pages
$32
Harper Voyager

Becky Chambers has built a career proving that science fiction's true final frontier isn't deep space but deep feeling. How can something as vast as space be the setting for something so cozy and comfortable? How does she balance her deeply character-driven stories while still tickling the sci-fi traditions that keep us nerds happy? I'd call her a magician, but that's a different genre.

Set on a fractious, resource-starved planet called Fortune, the novel braids two timelines around Signy, a quietly rebellious botanist, and Cora, a space pilot whose symbiosis with her living ship is both wondrous and a creeping liability. The structure cuts between a present tender peace and the perilous past that led to their almost salvation.

Chambers' prose remains my favorite part of her works. Sharp and soothing with a melancholy accent — it's so lovely. While time-skipping is not a new narrative gimmick, it works so, so well here, acting as an argument that intimacy is always assembled retroactively, one fragment at a time. That's an excellent word for this book, intimate. I ached and cried and cheered and never wanted it to end. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich

'Bodies of Magic'



By Freya Marske
9/15/26
464 pages
$28.99
Tor Books

Usually, if a book has "everything," I'm more than a little skeptical. It's difficult enough to pull off one genre, let alone several. Yet Freya Marske has managed to make a medical-fantasy-dark-academia-murder-mystery sing with all its twining threads. This book was an absolute joy to read. It was surprisingly philosophical at times and a delicious mystery that kept me up way too late.

At the Academie in the Blue City, healing magic is a licensed trade, and the licensing exam is a five-day gauntlet for five randomly chosen students. When our intrepid scholars stumble on a corpse during their first day of testing, they are suddenly forced to face much more than an exam. Power, class, institutional corruption and their own ambitions are all at play in this twisty tale.

This is a book about institutional rot and the isolation of medical workers, making clear parallels to our current health care crises. Yet, the world still has a lived-in feel and a brilliant cast of characters rendered with real granularity and distinct personalities. There are explorations of ambition, resentment and grief in between the drama, and the mix is handled so deftly. This is a dazzling example of mixed-genre storytelling. Don't miss it. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich







By Chris Werner

BUILT to endure

Why imports win on quality, performance and longevity.



When choosing your next vehicle, the debate between domestic and import models inevitably surfaces. As import automotive repair specialists, our technicians evaluate cars from the inside out every single day. While domestic automakers produce competitive options, import brands — spanning Japanese precision to European engineering — consistently demonstrate superior craftsmanship across three pivotal pillars: build quality, dynamic performance and operational longevity.

Precision quality down to the bolt. Import manufacturers, particularly Japanese brands like Toyota, Lexus and Honda, built their reputations on rigorous manufacturing philosophies such as "kaizen" (continuous improvement). The result is obsessive quality control, tighter panel tolerances and refined interiors crafted from durable materials that resist rattling and premature wear. Meanwhile, European marques like BMW, Audi and Porsche prioritize chassis rigidity and premium cabin ergonomics. In the service bays, this mechanical discipline is unmistakable: Electrical harnesses are better protected, fluid seals remain resilient under thermal stress, and fit-and-finish holds firm years down the line.

Dynamic, efficient performance. European imports lead the industry in chassis balance, sophisticated multi-link suspensions and responsive steering geometry engineered for autobahn-level stability. Even everyday Asian commuters deliver an agile, surefooted ride paired with class-leading thermal efficiency. Whether optimizing variable valve timing, turbocharging smaller displacement blocks or refining hybrid powertrains, imports achieve a harmonious balance of spirited throttle response and fuel economy.

Proven longevity and resale value. Longevity is where import vehicles offer the greatest return on investment. Routine maintenance — such as timely oil changes, fluid flushes and timing services — routinely carries Asian imports well beyond the 200,000-to-300,000-mile mark without catastrophic drivetrain failures. Engines and transmissions are over-engineered with strict tolerances, resulting in significantly lower rates of unexpected mechanical breakdown.

Because independent reliability studies consistently rank imports at the top of long-term durability metrics, they also retain their secondary market value far better than comparable domestic vehicles. A car that runs reliably for 15 years and commands a high resale value reduces your total cost of ownership substantially.

The bottom line. Paired with dedicated maintenance from an import specialist, an import vehicle remains roadworthy, safe and exhilarating for hundreds of thousands of miles. ■

Information provided by Chris Werner, owner and lead technician, Werner's Elite Auto, 506 1/2 E. Euclid Ave., Indianola, 515-259-0122, www.wernerseliteauto.com.



LOOKING BACK



The **November 2011 Norwalk Living magazine** featured the story, "We are thankful for …: Norwalk residents count their blessings." Those sharing their gratitude were Allison Kelly and Gracee Watrous, pictured on the cover, and Ellie Riter, Denny Wulf, Sandra Jennings, Mark Miller, Katherine Schmidt, Doug Pierce, Mark Taylor, Allison Kelly, Carson Raper, Jerry McNeley, Calvin Burch, Steve Crow, Hunter Gear, Dan Knox, James Thayer, Eric Roeder, Donna Lange, Joni Swedenhjelm and Tamara Collins. ■

TAKE OUR POLL

HAVE YOU FACED FOOD INSECURITY OVER THE HOLIDAYS?

1. Yes, in the past and currently
2. Yes, in the past
3. Yes, currently
4. Never

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO VOTE!

RESULTS FROM OCTOBER POLL: How often do you donate blood?



Regularly	42%
Never	42%
A couple of times a year	8%
Once in a blue moon	8%
About once a year	0%

IOWA Living MAGAZINES

READER PARTICIPATION

WHERE is it?

Do you recognize this closeup of a site in Norwalk? Email your guess to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with the subject line "Norwalk Where Is It." Include your name. Photos may also be submitted.

LAST MONTH'S PHOTO was of the seating area at Mullets Norwalk. ■





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NORWALK

WINTER SCHEDULE 26-27

V GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Nov 24	7:15PM	ADM	ADM High School
Dec 1	6:00PM	Ballard	Ballard High School
Dec 4	6:00PM	Ames	Ames High School
Dec 8	6:00PM	Indianola	Norwalk High School
Dec 11	6:00PM	Oskaloosa	Norwalk High School
Dec 15	6:00PM	Pella	Norwalk High School
Dec 18	6:00PM	Des Moines Christian	Des Moines Christian School
Jan 2	2:30PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial High School
Jan 5	7:30PM	North Polk	North Polk High School
Jan 8	6:00PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Jan 15	6:00PM	Pella Christian	Norwalk High School
Jan 18	6:00PM	Waukee	Norwalk High School
Jan 19	6:00PM	Ames	Norwalk High School
Jan 22	6:00PM	Indianola	Indianola High School
Jan 25	6:30PM	Clear Creek Amana	Norwalk High School
Jan 29	6:00PM	Pella	Pella High School
Feb 2	6:00PM	Des Moines Christian	Norwalk High School
Feb 5	6:00PM	Newton	Newton High School
Feb 9	6:00PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Norwalk High School
Feb 12	7:00PM	ADM	Norwalk High School
Feb 13	1:30PM	Iowa City Liberty	Norwalk High School

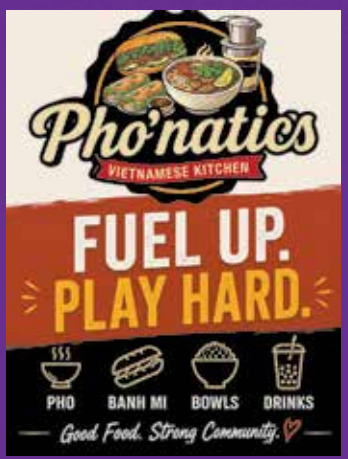
V BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Dec 1	7:30PM	Ballard	Ballard High School
Dec 4	7:30PM	Ames	Ames High School
Dec 5	1:30PM	Cedar Rapids Kennedy	Kennedy High School
Dec 8	7:30PM	Indianola	Norwalk High School
Dec 11	7:30PM	Oskaloosa	Norwalk High School
Dec 15	7:30PM	Pella	Norwalk High School
Dec 18	7:30PM	Des Moines Christian	Des Moines Christian School
Jan 2	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Alliant Energy PowerHouse
Jan 8	7:30PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Jan 15	7:30PM	Pella Christian	Norwalk High School
Jan 18	7:30PM	Waukee	Norwalk High School
Jan 19	7:30PM	Ames	Norwalk High School
Jan 22	7:30PM	Indianola	Indianola High School
Jan 26	7:00PM	Dowling Catholic	Norwalk High School
Jan 29	7:30PM	Pella	Pella High School
Feb 2	7:30PM	Des Moines Christian	Norwalk High School
Feb 5	7:30PM	Newton	Newton High School
Feb 6	10:00AM	CIML Crossover	TBA
Feb 9	7:30PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Norwalk High School
Feb 16	7:15PM	ADM	Norwalk High School
Feb 18	7:30PM	Waukee Northwest	Northwest High School

GOOD LUCK WARRIORS!

FOR ALL WARRIORS SCHEDULES

Schedules are subject to change.
Scan for most up-to-date schedules.





K WARRIORS

NORWALK Living MAGAZINE

V GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Nov 17	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Indianola High School
Nov 21	9:30AM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Dec 3	5:30PM	Triangular	Ames High School
Dec 5	10:00AM	Ames Invite	Ames High School
Dec 12	10:00AM	WDM Valley Tournament	Valley High School
Dec 17	5:30PM	Pella	Norwalk High School
Dec 19	9:00AM	Girls JV/V Tournament	Boone High School
Jan 7	6:30PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Jan 9	9:30AM	Ogden Girls Invitational	Ogden High School
Jan 14	4:00AM	Multiple Schools	Oskaloosa High School
Jan 16	10:00AM	Waukee NW Invite	Northwest High School
Jan 21	5:30PM	Newton	Norwalk High School

V BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Dec 1	5:30PM	Quad	Ames High School
Dec 5	10:00AM	Keith Young Invitational	Cedar Falls High School
Dec 10	7:00PM	Oskaloosa	Norwalk High School
Dec 11	5:30PM	Monte V Wrestling Tourney	Montezuma High School
Dec 12	10:00AM	Saydel Boys Tournament	Saydel High School
Dec 17	5:30PM	Pella	Norwalk High School
Dec 18	9:00AM	Battle of Waterloo Boys	Young Arena
Dec 19	9:00AM	Battle of Waterloo Boys	Young Arena
Jan 5	6:30PM	Denison-Schleswig	Norwalk High School
Jan 5	7:30PM	Ottumwa	Norwalk High School
Jan 7	7:30PM	Dallas Center-Grimes	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Jan 9	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Norwalk High School
Jan 14	6:30PM	Indianola	Indianola High School
Jan 16	9:30AM	Multiple Schools	Ankeny High School
Jan 21	6:30PM	Newton	Norwalk High School
Jan 23	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Jan 30	9:00AM	LHC Tournament	Newton High School

GIRLS/BOYS BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Nov 23	3:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Great Escape
Dec 12	1:00PM	Knoxville	Statesmen Lanes
Dec 15	3:00PM	Ames	Perfect Games Bowling
Dec 19	9:00AM	Pella	Air Lanes Bowling Center
Dec 19	1:00PM	Oskaloosa	Statesmen Lanes
Jan 9	9:00AM	Newton	Air Lanes Bowling Center
Jan 15	2:30PM	Ballard	Perfect Games
Jan 16	9:00AM	ADM	Air Lanes Bowling Center
Jan 18	1:00PM	Sigourney Keota	Air Lanes Bowling Center
Jan 23	9:00AM	LHC Tournament	Statesmen Lanes

BOYS SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT(S)	LOCATION
Dec 3	5:30PM	Des Moines Roosevelt	Hoover High School
Dec 10	5:30PM	Mason City	Lincoln High School
Dec 10	5:30PM	Ottumwa	Lincoln High School
Dec 17	5:30PM	Des Moines Hoover	Lincoln High School
Jan 7	5:30PM	Marshalltown	Marshalltown High School
Jan 12	5:30PM	Des Moines North	North High School
Jan 12	5:30PM	Carroll	Lincoln High School
Jan 14	5:30PM	Des Moines East	Lincoln High School
Jan 16	12:30PM	Multiple Schools	Washington High School
Jan 19	5:30PM	Fort Dodge	Fort Dodge Senior High School
Jan 23	10:00AM	IAC Boys Swimming Meet	Marshalltown YMCA-YWCA

Norwalk is with Des Moines Lincoln Swimming

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HEATING & COOLING

By Dale Adams

PRACTICAL advantages of mini-split systems



Ductless mini-split systems have become a practical and efficient solution for residential heating and cooling. Homeowners are turning to these systems because they solve problems that conventional ducted systems cannot. A mini-split system uses an outdoor compressor connected to one or more indoor air handlers by a narrow conduit. This small connection replaces bulky ductwork, reducing the energy loss that often occurs in forced-air systems.

Because air does not have to travel through long ducts, the system delivers conditioned air directly to each zone. This enables faster and more precise temperature control. Each indoor unit can operate independently, allowing different rooms to maintain their own distinct temperatures. This type of zoning is especially valuable in homes with uneven sunlight, irregular use, or areas added later, such as enclosed porches, finished basements or garage conversions.

Traditional HVAC systems often heat or cool an entire home to the same temperature, even when some rooms are empty. With mini-splits, only occupied spaces need to be conditioned. This targeted approach reduces energy waste while improving comfort for the people who are actually in the room. This can lead to noticeable energy savings, particularly in homes where certain areas are used infrequently.

Installation of a ductless system is also far less invasive than installing a central air system. Conventional ductwork typically requires large openings and often necessitates structural modifications in older homes. In contrast, a mini-split typically needs only a small hole through the wall to connect the indoor and outdoor components. That makes it an ideal option for retrofits, older homes without existing ducts, or spaces where extending ductwork would be impractical.

Proper sizing deserves special attention. An oversized unit will cycle on and off too frequently, wasting energy and causing uneven temperatures. An undersized unit may run constantly without reaching the desired comfort level. The correct capacity depends on the size, layout, insulation and orientation of each room or zone. For that reason, selecting the right unit should always involve a load calculation by a qualified HVAC professional.

Another strength of ductless systems is their efficiency rating. Many mini-splits use inverter-driven compressors that adjust speed automatically to meet current demand. Rather than switching completely on and off like conventional systems, the compressor runs steadily at variable speeds. This reduces temperature fluctuations and avoids the surge of energy that comes with frequent cycling.

In addition to energy savings, ductless mini-splits can improve indoor air quality. Since there are no ducts to collect dust, pollen or mold, fewer particles circulate throughout the home. Some models include multi-stage filtration that removes allergens and small airborne contaminants.

As energy standards and consumer expectations continue to shift, ductless mini-split systems represent a modern response to traditional HVAC challenges. They deliver precise control, reliable performance, and energy efficiency without the complexity of full duct networks. For many homeowners, this combination of adaptability and simplicity makes it an increasingly practical choice for comfortable and efficient living. ■

Do you still have questions? Visit www.tripleahomeservices.com for additional information. Dale and Natasha love to answer questions. Give them a call at 515-868-2779.

LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

DON'T click away your rights



We have noticed recently that some insurance company adjusters are attempting to settle personal injury claims within days of an accident. This might make sense in a minor accident with no apparent injuries. However, where a significant injury or hospitalization is involved, such a settlement may be premature. In this world of downloadable apps, e-signatures and digital communication, it is possible that a person may unwittingly agree to a settlement before becoming aware of the seriousness of his or her medical condition or the rights being given up. It seems we are conditioned to agree to long document forms without ever reading the words contained in them.

In this environment, it is the liability insurance adjuster's goal to obtain a signed release of the company's insured party in exchange for a payment to the injured party as quickly as possible. For the sake of "convenience," such releases are often presented digitally whereby a simple "click" can extinguish an injured party's claim. One should be very careful before ever agreeing to accept payment from an insurance company that promises to pay for an injury shortly after an accident. By accepting such payment, the injured party will have essentially settled the case and closed off any opportunity for full compensation. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to "undo" a misinformed acceptance of an early settlement proposal.

Iowa Code Chapter 507B contains specific rules concerning how insurance companies are to fairly settle claims. For example, an unfair claim settlement practice may include "not attempting in good faith to effectuate prompt, fair and equitable settlements of claims in which liability has become reasonably clear." The focus of the statute is on whether the company is in violation with such frequency as to indicate a general business practice. Enforcement is handled by the Insurance Commissioner.

In Bates v. Allied, 467 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1991), the Supreme Court of Iowa held that 507B does not create a private cause of action against an insurance company that commits an unfair claim settlement practice. The court explained that, while an insurer has a fiduciary relationship with its insured, it has an adversarial relationship with a third-party claimant. Therefore, a tort victim, as a third-party claimant, cannot compel a tortfeasor's insurer to

negotiate and settle a claim in good faith any more than he could compel the tortfeasor to do so himself.

In conclusion, it should be understood the insurance company for the at-fault party has an adversarial relationship with the injured person. It is crucial for an injured person to read and understand all documents sent by an insurance company before signing or "clicking" agreement to the terms. ■

Information provided by Ken Winjum, The Winjum Law Firm, P.L.C., 1220 Sunset Drive., Suite 103, Norwalk, 515-981-5220, www.winjumlaw.com.





HONORING OUR LOCAL Veterans

Stacey Cole



Prole
Military branch: U.S. Army, Iowa National Guard
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Served: 2000-2015
"Serving in the Army taught me that service is bigger than yourself. It means sacrifice, resilience, teamwork and learning to keep moving forward even when things are difficult."

Rowdy Bolinger



Norwalk
Military branch: U.S. Marine Corps
Rank: Sergeant, 0311 infantry rifleman
Served: 1996-2004 and 2007-2008
"The Marines allowed so many opportunities to a small-town Iowa kid. I was able to see the world from Hong Kong to Thailand, Australia, Iraq and everything in between. I met some of the best friends a man could ever have, and I was able to go to college, expenses paid. If you're on the fence about joining the service JUST DO IT."

Sherry (Bouley) Fleming



Rural Norwalk
Military branch: U.S. Navy
Rank: RM3
Served: 1970-1973
"I believe people don't join the services to be honored. Although, I do feel the veterans of foreign wars have given all Americans something invaluable and should be respected for that service. Some of the ways that can be done is to be respectful of all Americans and teach our children that standing for the National Anthem and the presentation of the Colors is simply a tiny way to say thanks for the freedom we all enjoy. The veterans will see and appreciate it."

Albert J. Williams



Norwalk
Military branch: U.S. Marine Corps
Rank: E3, Lance Corporal
Served: October 1969 to October 1971
Williams served as a combat/radioman in Vietnam with an infantry unit and was awarded an accommodation for saving lives. He is glad to have made it home alive from the war. He has been in the ministry for 45 years of service with the Church of God in Christ.

Gavin McKibben



Norwalk
Military branch: Army National Guard
Served: Currently enlisted, has served seven years as an infantryman so far
"It is the single best decision I have made. I've seen so many places and done so many things with some great people."

Brian Wallace



Norwalk
Military branch: U.S. Army
Rank: E-4
Served: March 1976 to March 1982
"God bless America. God bless our troops, and God bless our first responders. It was my greatest honor to serve."

VETERANS DAY IS WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11, 2026

Cumming American Legion Post 562 Honor Guard



Ray Free

Norwalk
Military branch: Army
Rank: Specialist 5
Served: 1966-1968
"I was drafted and served proudly even though there were people who were against us and the Vietnam War."



Stephanie Wuestewald

Norwalk
Military branch: Army National Guard
Rank: Sergeant First Class
Served: January 1999 - April 2025
"With close to 26 years in the National Guard overlapping with 14 years of active duty, I was able to retire from the Department of the Army. I miss my team and the soldiers that I trained and I'd go back in a heartbeat. Serving in the military offered me opportunities for personal growth, job skills and a sense of purpose. Serving can build leadership, self discipline and a strong sense of camaraderie. The aforementioned are useful throughout your lives, and I gained all of it by raising my hand 07.01.1999 to protect the USA."



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Upcoming in Norwalk Living magazine:

Santa's helpers: As we know, Santa needs plenty of help in spreading the Christmas spirit. If you or a group you are involved with gives Santa a hand in making Christmas happier for others, share your story with us. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Healthy eating and recipes: Have you made a commitment to eating healthier? Share your stories of challenges and triumphs as well as any favorite healthy recipes. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

High school sweethearts who have passed the test of time: Are you and your high school sweetheart still together years after graduation? Share your story with us. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Jingle and Mingle Senior Holiday Luncheon

Friday, Dec. 4, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, 720 Orchard Hills Drive, Norwalk

Norwalk Parks and Recreation is hosting a Jingle and Mingle Holiday Luncheon geared toward ages 55-plus. It features a catered lunch provided by Urban Grill, door prizes and a live holiday performance by the Norwalk High School Choirs. Registration is open through Nov. 22. The cost is $15 for residents and $17.25 for non-residents. Register by scanning the QR code.

Annual Tree Lighting

Friday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m.

City State Bank Norwalk Fieldhouse, 2011 E. 18th St., Norwalk

Norwalk's annual tree lighting is free to attend and will be full of holiday music, Christmas lights all around and lots of fun for everyone. Visitors will also enjoy a special visit from Santa Claus.

Coffee and Camaraderie

First Tuesdays of the month, 10 a.m. to noon

Norwalk United Methodist Church, 1100 Gordon Ave.

All veterans and service members are invited for a morning of coffee and camaraderie, a morning of connection and community. Whether you're a veteran, active-duty member, spouse or caregiver, everyone is welcome. Enjoy coffee and come together to form new friendships and share stories and experiences.

Medicare Open Enrollment

Every year, Oct. 15–Dec. 7, persons with Medicare Part D have the opportunity to review their drug plan coverage. SHIIP/SMP volunteer counselors are available for a free, confidential and unbiased review of cost and coverage, with changes taking effect Jan. 1. Call 515-962-5375 to schedule your appointment at the Indianola Activity Center, 2204 West Second Ave.). Phone appointments are also available. SHIIP/SMP is a service of the State of Iowa. Volunteer counselors do not sell or promote any insurance companies, policies or agents.

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- Friday, Nov. 13, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: Out of the Box featuring Dennis Kain and Sean Sullivan Sr.
- Saturday, Nov. 14, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: The Ripoffs
- Sunday, Nov. 15, 2-5 p.m. Live Music: Ducharme-Jones Band
- Thursday, Nov. 19, 6 p.m. Trivia
- Friday, Nov. 20, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: Yubu
- Saturday, Nov. 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cumming Holiday Sip & Shop
- Saturday, Nov. 21, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: Chad Elliott Listening Room Event
- Sunday, Nov. 22, 2-5 p.m. Live Music: Silversonic
- Saturday, Nov. 28, 6 p.m. Open Mic Night
- Sunday, Nov. 29, 2-5 p.m. Live Music: The Fabulous TruTones
- Thursday, Dec. 3, 6 p.m. Trivia
- Friday, Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: Brian Herrin
- Saturday, Dec. 5, 6-9 p.m. Live Music: Brother Trucker
- Sunday, Dec. 6, 2-5 p.m. Live Music: Other Brothers
- Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m. Music Bingo

Cyclone Kitchen

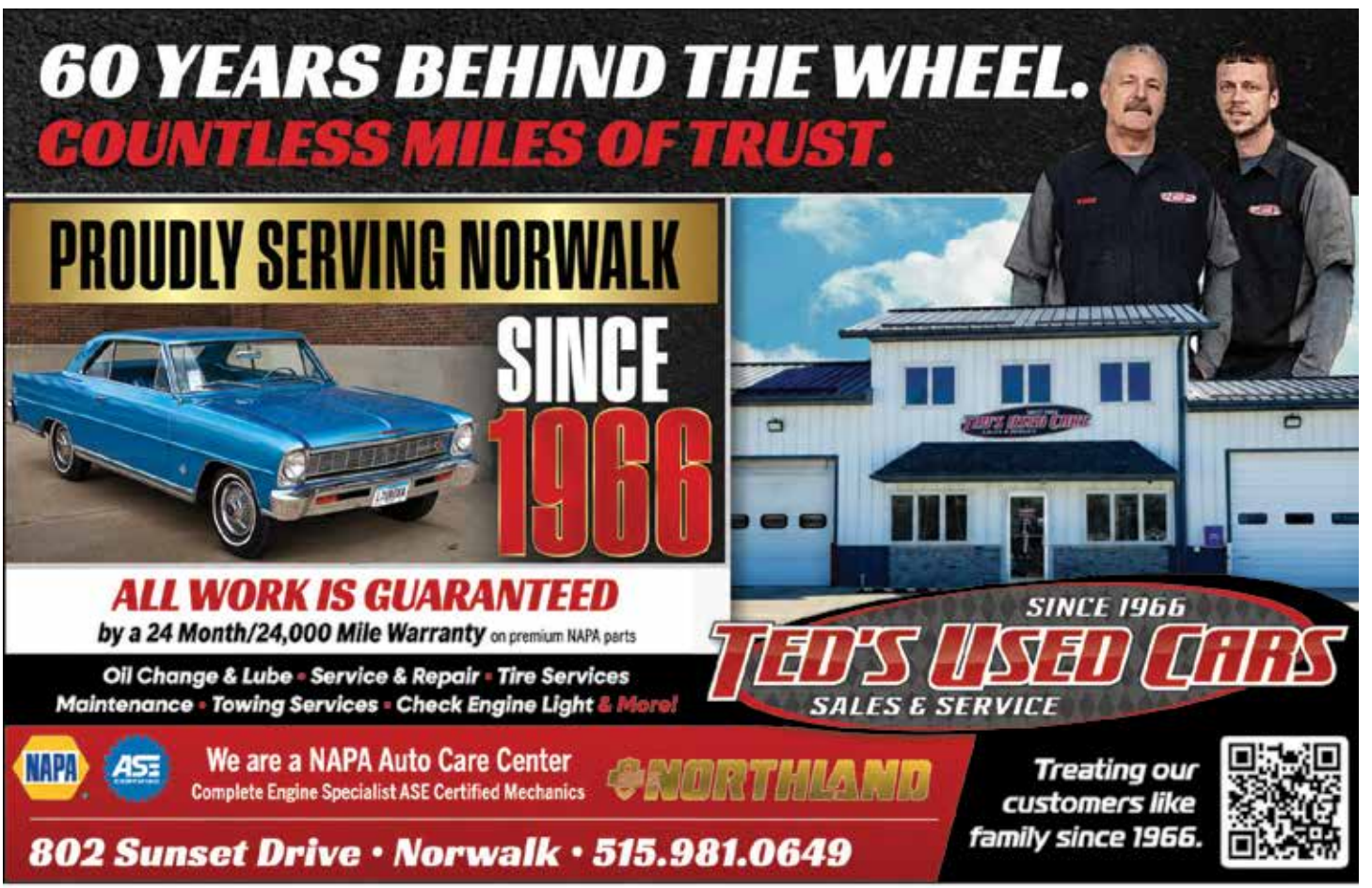
Learning to cook just got a lot more fun. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Warren County is launching Cyclone Kitchen — a hands-on community cooking program that promises new skills, good meals and even better company. No experience necessary. Each two-hour session brings neighbors, friends and coworkers together in a teaching kitchen to prepare seasonal dishes side by side, guided by food and nutrition experts from Iowa State University.

"We know that people in Warren County want to eat well, but life gets busy and cooking can feel like one more thing on a long list," Cathy Drost, health and human sciences educator of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. "Cyclone Kitchen changes that. It's relaxed, it's fun and you leave with practical skills — and a real meal you can make at home."

Each session weaves in nutrition science and practical technique, with the goal of helping participants build habits that stick long after they leave the kitchen. The cost is $30 to attend with sponsorship from Warren County Extension. Events are held at Warren County Extension Office, 200 W. Second Ave., Indianola.

Private group sessions are also available — and Cyclone Kitchen can come to you. Whether it's your office, your venue or a nearby location, it's a fresh idea for team outings, book clubs, bridal showers and friend gatherings looking for something more memorable than the usual dinner out. Groups can reserve a session exclusively and tailor the experience to their occasion.

Browse the schedule and register at https://go.iastate.edu/RXERVB, where you can also submit a request to bring Cyclone Kitchen to your community or book a private event. For any questions about this offering, contact Elizabeth at eliza@iastate.edu or 515-961-6237. ■





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INVESTMENT

By Daniel Rundahl

TAX PLANNING… before 'the ball drops'



November is an ideal time to look beyond holiday spending and consider how today's financial decisions may affect your taxes in the coming year. For retirees and those approaching retirement, coordinating Roth conversions, required minimum distributions (RMDs), and charitable giving can create meaningful planning opportunities. The key is to evaluate these decisions together before Dec. 31.

Roth conversions: Is this the right year? Converting assets from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA requires paying income tax on the taxable amount converted. In exchange, Roth withdrawals can be tax-free, and Roth IRAs have no lifetime RMDs for their original owners.

A conversion may make sense during a lower-income year, such as early retirement before Social Security or RMDs begin. However, converting too much could push income into a higher tax bracket or increase Medicare premiums. Consider making partial conversions over several years rather than making one large conversion. Remember, a conversion intended for this tax year must be completed by end of 2026.

RMDs: Plan before the deadline. Traditional IRA owners must begin RMDs at age 73 or 75, depending on their year of birth. These distributions are typically taxable, and failing to take the required amount can result in penalties. Review your calculated distribution and confirm that all required withdrawals will be completed on time. An RMD is not simply a withdrawal decision. It affects taxable income and should be considered alongside other planned distributions and conversions.

Charitable giving: Consider a QCD. For those 70½ or older, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) allows funds to move directly from an eligible IRA to a qualifying charity. A properly executed QCD can count toward an RMD while excluding the donated amount from taxable income. This can be especially valuable for retirees who give regularly but file the standard deduction on taxes. In today's tax environment, working with a financial advisor to take advantage of giving deductions will save you tax money.

Prepare for the new tax year. As you plan for 2027, review expected income, tax brackets, Medicare premiums and your charitable intentions with your financial advisor and tax professional. Your 2026 end-of-year planning should include actions for this year and a plan for greater motion to "tax-free" and tax avoidance in 2027.

Make the decisions work together: The greatest opportunity often comes from coordinating these strategies. A QCD may reduce taxable income while a Roth conversion increases it. An RMD may limit the room available for additional taxable income. Remember, keep those pesky IRMAA limits in mind looking forward two years from now. Evaluating all these together can help you make more informed decisions.

A little preparation now can help you enter the new year with greater clarity and confidence. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinanical.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

REAL ESTATE

By Andria Lang

THE MARKET has changed

Selling strategy should, too.



If there is one thing I have learned in my 11 years of real estate, it is the market is always changing. And right now, we are seeing a shift that sellers need to understand. Gone are the days when you could put a sign in the yard, snap a few photos and expect multiple offers by the weekend. Today's buyers are more selective, taking their time, and paying close attention to price, condition and presentation.

Does that mean homes are not selling? Absolutely not. But it does mean our strategy needs to change.

Pricing matters more than ever. Buyers know when a home is overpriced. Starting too high and chasing the market down with price reductions can ultimately cost sellers valuable time and money.

Presentation is everything. Staging, professional photography and making sure your home stands out from the competition aren't just nice extras anymore. They are essential.

Patience is part of the process. Homes may take longer to sell, and that does not necessarily mean something is wrong. It means we need to be realistic, proactive and willing to adjust when the market tells us to.

My biggest advice? Do not base today's selling expectations on what your neighbor experienced two years ago. Every market requires a different approach, and having the right strategy from day one makes all the difference. ■

Information provided by Andria Lang, Real Estate, andria@thealteam.com, 515-985-8059, Your Norwalk Home Girl.



PLAN AHEAD

By Buffy Peters

A SMALL but meaningful gift



It is officially upon us… the holly, jolly holiday season. But, for those grieving, it can be difficult to know how to manage grief and this season of togetherness. What do you do when nothing feels quite right without the person who died, yet everyone else seems so cheery and bright?

Grieving during this time of year can feel especially isolating. One reason is because it is common for others to avoid talking about the person who died to "protect" those who are grieving. This typically has the opposite effect, however. It often leaves the person grieving feeling alone in their grief, feeling more isolated and feeling that others have "forgotten" about the loss.

Let's change this. I want to issue a bit of a challenge this holiday season. It is a small but powerful gesture that anyone can do and can make a real impact: If you know someone who is grieving, I want you to reach out to them. A text, a card, a phone call — a message of any kind will do.

Not sure what to say? Try: "Hi. I was thinking about you this holiday season and remembering (insert their loved one's name). Just wanted you to know you are on my mind."

A message certainly doesn't "fix" someone's grief (because it is not something to fix), but it may help them to feel a little less alone.

Sending comfort and care to all those grieving this holiday season. ■

Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com/academy-of-grief-and-loss.



By Michael Lane

HOME and ride sharing



The concept of "sharing economy" is becoming more popular than ever. Companies like Uber and Lyft allow people to utilize their personal vehicles to provide a ride service similar to a taxi service. Similarly, there are now homeowners renting out their properties to vacationers via companies such as Airbnb. The concept continues to grow and gain acceptance as many people enjoy the convenience. For those of you who are considering providing these services, the benefits and risks should be taken into consideration when deciding if it is the right decision for you.

Ride-sharing services: Providing transportation for others in your car.

Advantages

• Flexibility: Drivers can choose which fares to accept and work as much or as little as they like.

• Accountability: Services allow drivers to rate their riders. Also, customers must create an account with personal information to request a ride. So, unlike a taxi, each ride can be traced to a specific customer.

• Extra income: Some drivers are full-time; some drive around their regular work or school schedules or drive for extra income during retirement.

Disadvantages

• Risk: Income can be irregular, and drivers may have limited or no access to programs and benefits, such as worker's compensation. Services typically have liability insurance when transporting a passenger. Your personal auto policy might not cover you, for example, if you get in a crash after dropping the passenger off.

• Legal considerations: The legality of the services is in question. Cities have cited drivers for operating an illegal taxi service.

• Cost: Repair costs from the wear and tear on your car.

Home-sharing services: Renting out a room or your home.

Advantages

• Flexibility: Depending on the service you use to list your property, you have control over which visitors and when you allow them.

• Extra income: Renting out vacation properties/extra rooms generates extra income.

Disadvantages

• Financial risk: Most homeowners policies and renters policies do not cover significant commercial activity, which could hurt you if your guests cause damage, steal something, sustain an injury or participate in illegal acts.

• Safety: There is no way around it: They are strangers in your home, which carries a risk.

• Fees: Part of what the customer pays goes to the listing company.

An experienced insurance agent will be able to help you understand the potential risks from an insurance perspective on these sharing economy opportunities. ■

Lane Insurance would be happy to help examine your risks and suggest the best coverages for you and your family. Feel free to request a quote online at laneinsurance.com or give us a call at 515-981-4614. Information provided by Mike Lane, Lane Insurance Agency Inc., 1225 Sunset Drive, Norwalk.





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www.iowalivingmagazines.com/holiday-gift-guide-2026

EDUCATION By T.K. West

MEET Kim Casey

A return to her roots

A proud Norwalk native, Kim Casey is excited to return to her hometown. Casey graduated from the Norwalk Community School District in 1995 and now teaches at Norwalk High School. She said Norwalk will always hold a special place in her heart, and she is grateful to be part of the community again.



Kim Casey said teaching has taught her that some of the most meaningful moments come from the challenges faced along the way.

"It means so much to have the opportunity to return to the district that helped shape who I am today. I have so many great memories of my own school experience, and I chose to come back because I want to help create those same meaningful experiences for today's students," Casey said.

As a special education teacher, Casey helps students work through challenges, build self-confidence and celebrate their successes, both big and small. She spends part of her day supporting students in two English classes and the rest helping students develop their literacy skills. Over the years, Casey said she has learned to adapt, think outside the box and remind herself that progress doesn't always happen overnight.

"My favorite part of the job is building relationships with students, encouraging them when things get tough and watching them realize what they are capable of. Every student's growth is worth celebrating, and I enjoy being part of their journey," Casey said.

Casey also said teaching has taught her that some of the most meaningful moments come from the challenges faced along the way. One of the biggest challenges she has encountered as an educator is finding the right approach when something is not working. However, those moments have helped her grow as an educator and reminded her why she chose this profession.

"Every student deserves someone who believes in them, advocates for them and never gives up on their potential. The relationships I've built and the lessons I've learned along the way have made me a stronger educator and continue to shape the way I teach," Casey said.

This school year, Casey is looking forward to learning new programs, reconnecting with the Norwalk community and growing alongside her fellow staff members. She also welcomes opportunities to support her students beyond the classroom by cheering them on and participating in activities outside of school.

"It's rewarding to give back to the community that gave me so much and to be part of a team that makes a difference in students' lives every day," Casey said. "I'm grateful to be back in Norwalk and look forward to all the opportunities this year will bring." ■

HOME HEALTH By Julie Reed, RN, CDP

FINDING balance

How adult day services benefit the whole family



For older adults who need additional support during the day, staying engaged, connected and safe can make a meaningful difference in quality of life. But for family caregivers, meeting those needs while juggling careers, appointments, household obligations and personal responsibilities isn't always easy. Adult day services offer a practical solution, helping older adults thrive while giving their families greater flexibility and peace of mind.

Support that fits your schedule: Adult day programs provide a welcoming environment for individuals who benefit from companionship, supervision and purposeful activities. Families can choose anything from one day a week to a regular Monday-through-Friday schedule, depending on their circumstances. While these programs often serve individuals experiencing dementia, participation isn't limited to those with a diagnosis. The goal is to help people feel secure, involved and connected.

The comfort of a familiar routine: Knowing what to expect can be reassuring for older adults and their families alike. Adult day programs create a consistent daily experience through shared meals, conversation, engaging activities and attentive support from trained professionals.

For families, that predictability can be transformative. Caregivers frequently describe feeling less overwhelmed when their loved ones have a dependable place to spend the day. Many also notice that their family members return home more content and relaxed, easing stress and creating more opportunities to simply enjoy time together.

More than a place to spend the day: Quality adult day programs focus on supporting the whole person. Important elements include: opportunities to build friendships and enjoy social connections; balanced meals and nutritious snacks; physical and cognitive activities that encourage well-being; and a comfortable, secure setting with compassionate professional support

Benefits that extend to the entire family: Caregiving can gradually become more demanding, sometimes without families realizing how much they are taking on. Rather than waiting until stress becomes unmanageable, incorporating adult day services early can help establish a healthier balance.

Older adults gain opportunities for stimulation, companionship and routine. Meanwhile, caregivers have time to meet other obligations, attend to their own well-being and approach their caregiving responsibilities with renewed energy. That balance can strengthen relationships and improve daily life for everyone.

Taking the next step: Every family's circumstances are different, and adult day services can be tailored to complement the support already being provided at home. Whether someone attends occasionally or throughout the workweek, the combination of meaningful engagement and dependable care can make a lasting difference.

If caring for an older loved one is becoming more challenging, consider exploring adult day services now rather than waiting for a crisis. The right support can help older adults continue enjoying fulfilling days while allowing those who love them to find a little more balance in their own lives. ■

Julie Reed, RN, CDP, is director of Dahl Adult Day Services on the campus of Wesley on Grand, a WesleyLife community for healthy living in Des Moines. Learn more at www.wesleylife.org/adult-day.

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WELLNESS By Jen Penisten-Clark

AN ALTERNATIVE for pain



Entering the holiday season, we want to not only look our best but feel our best. Back pain, knee pain, carpal tunnel, foot pain, etc., can all put a hinderance on our enjoyment of any event. There are many modalities of treatment that can help, and Emsculpt NEO functional mode turns the table from body contouring to rehabilitation.

Emsculpt NEO induces deep muscle contractions that do the work the body isn't able to. The muscles and nerve pathways are retrained, which can help the feelings of pain and weakness. Radiofrequency gently heats muscles for increased circulation, recovery support and tissue relaxation. Spasms decrease, range of motion and circulation increase and muscle mis/disuse is prevented.

This treatment is for anybody with aches and pains that are acute or even chronic, including patients recovering from sports injuries or orthopedic surgeries, chronic back pain, poor core/pelvic floor musculature and those who have decreased muscle due to aging. Athletes can look forward to relieving imbalances, improving athletic stamina and recovering more quickly than they would with traditional measures.

Patients who get this therapy can notice an immediate relief in stiffness and increased range of motion. Core muscles feel stronger, posture is better and daily activities become easier. There is no downtime or discomfort, and sessions are only 30 minutes once a weekly for four weeks with "touch up" sessions as needed. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten-Clark, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1951 E. 18th St., Suite 105, Norwalk, 515-850-7848, vividlifespa.com.



HEALTH By Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh

SHOCKWAVE therapy

Staying active through the holidays



Shockwave therapy uses focused acoustic waves to stimulate healing in injured soft tissue. The treatment increases blood flow, breaks down scar tissue and calcifications, reduces inflammation and prompts the body to produce collagen and new healthy tissue. Patients often notice less pain and improved function after a short series of sessions, with benefits continuing for weeks afterward.

It is commonly used for chronic tendon problems such as rotator cuff issues in the shoulder, tennis elbow, Achilles tendon pain and plantar fasciitis in the heel. Because the therapy targets the source of the problem rather than simply masking symptoms, many people regain strength and mobility that had been limited for months.

As the holidays approach, several factors can aggravate these conditions. Extra walking, standing and lifting while shopping or decorating; long car rides; colder weather that stiffens joints; and the physical demands of cooking and hosting can increase pain and slow recovery. Stress and disrupted routines may also cause people to delay care until after the new year.

Addressing the underlying tissue problem now helps minimize flare-ups and supports a more comfortable, mobile holiday period. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh, Norwalk Chiropractic, 1300 Sunset Drive, 515-981-9208, www.norwalk-chiropractic.com. Norwalk Chiropractic is a provider with most major insurance companies.

HEALTH

By Dr. Michael O'Meara

Q: What determines eye color, and can it change over time?



A: Eye color depends on the amount of pigment present in the iris. The iris is the colored, circular part of the eye that surrounds the pupil and contains pigment called melanin. The color of the eyes depends on how much melanin there is in the iris and how that pigment reflects and scatters light. The more melanin, the darker the eye color.

Brown eyes, the most common eye color, have a high concentration of melanin, but blue eyes have almost no melanin. Colors like green and hazel have a low to moderate amount of melanin. What determines how much melanin is present in the iris? This is controlled by multiple genes, so eye color inheritance is not totally predictable.

Eye color can change over time. Many infants are born with light blue eyes due to the melanin producing cells not being exposed to light. By the age of 1 to 3, eye color becomes more stabilized. Changes in eye color in adulthood are uncommon. When they do occur. They are often associated with eye disorders that cause iris inflammation or pigment loss. ■

Information provided by Michael O'Meara, O.D. of Optometric Associates of Warren County, P.C., 1228 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-0224.



HEALTH

By Dr. Donna Grant

WHY FALL is the best time to schedule your dental checkup



As the leaves change and the year winds down, fall is the perfect season to check in on your oral health. Between busy holiday plans and the year's end, many people forget to schedule their dental visits — only to realize in December that their insurance benefits are about to expire.

Most dental insurance plans reset on Jan. 1, which means any unused benefits — like covered cleanings, exams or treatments — won't roll over. By booking your appointment in the fall, you can make the most of the coverage you have already paid for and avoid the year-end rush when schedules fill up fast.

Beyond insurance savings, fall is an ideal time for preventive care. Addressing small issues now — like cavities, gum irritation or sensitivity — can prevent larger (and more expensive) problems later. Plus, getting a cleaning before the holidays helps your smile look and feel its best for family gatherings and photos.

So, before the season gets too hectic, take a moment to prioritize your oral health. Your teeth will thank you — and so will your calendar. Call your dentist today to schedule your fall checkup and head into the holidays with a confident, healthy smile. ■

Information provided by Dr. Donna Grant, Norwalk Family Dentistry, 1101 Chatham Ave., Suite A, Norwalk, 515-256-9000, www.norwalkfamilydentistry.com.



By Dr. Kelly Cook

NEW hearing technology has arrived



This fall, several hearing aid manufacturers released new and improved hearing devices. While there are key differences between them, all feature state-of-the-art technology that will benefit your life in three ways.

Benefits of the latest and greatest

What can you expect from next-generation hearing aids? We believe these models will provide you with:

• An easier listening experience. You will spend less effort trying to follow conversations, making everyday listening feel more natural.

• Greater speech understanding in noise. Forget about struggling to keep up in situations where listening is difficult. You will be able to effortlessly hear and understand the people around you.

• More engagement in your life. Hearing better can help you stay connected, participate more easily and feel more confident in your daily life.

Other pluses to consider

New hearing devices are smaller and more discreet than previous versions. Some are nearly invisible yet still loaded with the high-tech features and functionality needed for hearing your best. They are also designed to be easy on the eyes, available in fun fashion colors and sleek styles that resemble wireless earbuds.

Battery life has been boosted, too. The latest rechargeable hearing aids keep going all day long from a single charge, so you can spend less time worrying about running out of power and more time enjoying the moments that matter.

Many of today's cutting-edge hearing devices also include Bluetooth® LE Audio, the next generation of Bluetooth technology. It delivers high-quality streaming, hands-free calls, crystal-clear sound and low battery consumption. This latest version of Bluetooth also lets new hearing aids receive Auracast™ broadcast audio, an exciting new assistive listening technology that is popping up in more public places. Connect to an Auracast shared audio stream at the airport to hear announcements more clearly, at the gym to listen to your favorite TV show or at the theater to better follow the play — the possibilities are endless.

Wondering which hearing aids will best meet your needs, lifestyle and hearing goals? Schedule a consultation with your hearing care provider today. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, www.IowaHearingCenter.com.



FAITH By Rob Jones

AWESTRUCK



Have you ever seen or experienced something that was so awe inspiring that it literally took your breath away? A few years ago, I experienced that sensation twice in just one week. A group of us traveled to Las Vegas for a conference. While we were there, we drove a short distance from the city to the Hoover Dam. This man-made wonder stands as a monument to the human spirit. The sight of so much concrete holding back the Colorado River was awe-inspiring. We marveled at the ingenuity of those workmen who completed this engineering feat.

A couple of days later, we hit the road into Arizona to see one of the greatest wonders of the world: the Grand Canyon. All of us were speechless as we stood on the rim looking across the 10-mile-wide chasm to the other side and down into the 5,000-foot riverbed below. What a spectacle of nature to behold.

While both sites were truly incredible, honestly, the one that blew us away the most was the Grand Canyon. When we stood on top of the Hoover Dam, we praised man for building such an amazing work of art and engineering greatness. When we stood on the rim of the canyon, we praised God for creating something so beautiful and amazing that revealed His greatness. I was reminded of Psalm 111:2 "The Lord's works are great, studied by all who delight in them." And Revelation 4:11 "Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because you have created all things, and by your will they exist and were created."

I think it is a natural response to marvel at something that takes your breath away. I also believe that is part of the reason why God created our world — for our enjoyment. But here is the best truth of all: Thanks to Jesus Christ, not only can we know about the God who made such wonders, we can know Him personally. The Gospel of John reminds us in 1:12, "But to all who did receive Him [Jesus Christ], he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name." Isn't that awesome? If we will believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for our sin and rose again, and if we will receive Him as our Savior, as the forgiver of our sin, we can enjoy an eternal relationship with God as his son or daughter and spend eternity in heaven. Do we deserve such a relationship and such a future? Of course not. The Bible says no one is worthy. We are all sinners in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23). But that is what is beautiful about God and about his gift of salvation that he makes available to all of us. Even though we don't deserve it, it is there for the taking if we are willing to humble ourselves, repent of our sin, ask for forgiveness and receive his gift of eternal life by faith. Just remember these words: "But God proves his own love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). You can insert your name into the last word of that verse, "Christ died for… you." Once you have experienced forgiveness of sin and the transformation Christ brings to your life through salvation, nothing in this world will ever be more beautiful than that. ■

Pastor Rob Jones is the senior pastor of Fellowship Community Church in Norwalk. The church was founded under his leadership in 1995.

FINANCE By Kourtne Klocko

PLANNING for retirement? Start here



The first step should be to estimate how much income you will need to fund your retirement. Your specific needs depend on your goals and many other factors.

Use your current income as a starting point: Your current income sustains your present lifestyle. Taking that income and backing out the percentage spent on expenses you will no longer be liable for (e.g., payroll taxes) will, theoretically, allow you to sustain your current lifestyle.

It would also be prudent to review all current expenses in detail to predict how those expenses might change as you transition into retirement. Estimating your future spending needs will aid in creating a clearer picture of your financial plan in retirement. Combining each of these factors with your current nest egg will help you better determine an appropriate age to retire comfortably.

Control what you can control: Retirees have complete control of two things: when they retire and how much they spend in retirement. Using the estimated percentage of spending gives a great starting point to plan your retirement picture. The decision on when you retire will help to determine when your savings will stop and how long you need to provide income.

Identify your sources of retirement income: We all hope to live to an old age, but a longer life means you will have more years of retirement to fund. You may run the risk of outliving your savings and other income sources. To help plan, you need to consider what sources of retirement income will be available to you. You can likely count on Social Security to provide a portion of your retirement income. To get an estimate of your Social Security benefits, visit the Social Security Administration website (www.ssa.gov).

Additional sources of retirement income may include a work-based retirement plan, IRAs, annuities and other investments. The amount of income you receive from those sources will depend on the amount you invest, the rate of investment return and other factors.

Make up any income shortfall: Here are a few suggestions that you can take to help bridge the gap.

- Try to cut current expenses, giving you more money to save for retirement
- Scale back on your planned retirement lifestyle
- Consider delaying your retirement

There is never a guarantee to your retirement lifestyle, but good planning and a trustworthy investment partner to help guide you can make a big difference. ■

City State Bank Trust & Investments is here to help. Contact Kourtne Klocko at 515-981-1400 to get started. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax and/or legal professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

By Martha Munro

WHAT makes your business better than the competition?



In today's competitive marketplace, being good at what you do isn't always enough. Consumers have more choices than ever, and businesses are constantly competing for their attention, loyalty and dollars. So, what makes a customer choose your business over another? If the answer isn't immediately clear, it may be time to take a closer look at what sets you apart.

Every successful business has something that makes it unique. It might be a specialized service, a particular area of expertise, an exceptional customer experience, a commitment to quality or a deep understanding of a specific audience. The key is identifying that distinction and communicating it in a way that makes your value clear to potential customers.

This is your niche — the space your business can own in the marketplace.

Start by understanding what you do best. What products or services generate the strongest results? What do your customers consistently compliment? What problems do you solve better than others? Sometimes, your greatest competitive advantage is something you take for granted because it comes naturally to you. Asking employees, longtime customers and trusted business partners for their perspectives can reveal strengths you may have overlooked.

Next, consider who benefits most from what you offer. Trying to appeal to everyone can make it difficult to stand out to anyone. Defining your ideal customer allows you to focus your messaging, marketing efforts and resources on the people most likely to need your products or services. When customers recognize you understand their specific needs, your business becomes more relevant and memorable.

Once you identify your specialty, make sure your marketing reflects it. Your website, advertising, social media, sales conversations and printed materials should consistently communicate what makes your business different and why that difference matters. Simply claiming to offer great service or quality products isn't enough. Explain what that means to your customers. Do you provide faster turnaround times, personalized recommendations, specialized knowledge or solutions tailored to a particular industry? Specifics build credibility.

Remember, your niche doesn't have to be groundbreaking or completely exclusive. It simply needs to give customers a compelling reason to choose you. It should also be authentic, supported by your team's capabilities and aligned with what your customers value.

Defining your competitive advantage isn't a one-time exercise. Regularly evaluating your position helps ensure your business remains relevant and continues delivering meaningful value.

Ultimately, the goal isn't to be everything to everyone. It's to be the right choice for the customers who need what you do best.

When you can clearly answer the question, "Why should someone choose us?" you give your customers a reason to remember your business, trust your expertise and return when they need you again. ■

Information provided by Martha Munro, Advertising Account Executive, Big Green Umbrella Media, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, Iowa 50131, 515-953-4822 x314, martha@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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RIBBON Cutting

Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Roosters Coffee on Oct. 15.





David Lippold, Keegan Leaper, Kathleen Lippold, Becky Harris, Summer Clark and Beth Gremler



Amy Havick and Holdyn Havick



Steve and Kris Howard



Kalli Henke, Kolt McGee, Kynlie McGee and Ann Heaverlo



Haley Clark



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RUNorwalk

Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce presented RUNorwalk on Oct. 24.



Tommy, Ben and Lucy



Jaina Gladson, Elizabeth Moore and Leah Moore


Cason Raschke, Olivia Winslow and Claire Comes


Norma Rossi and Victoria Velasco


Travis Stanley and Hollie Zajicek


Joe Albrecht, Jared Carlson and Doug Rapper


Dr. Maureen Winslow and Holly Albrecht


Alexandria and Dominic


Robby Wilder and Kate Miron



Elise Wieland, Tyson Wieland and Paul Grinvalds


Aeson and Aaron Wells

THANK YOU BUS DRIVERS



NORWALK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2026

1641 STUDENTS
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21 school buses that carry 77 passengers

10 Suburban/Vans

2 Handicap Busses



Norwalk CSD uses an online routing software, Tyler Technology, and a parent app, My Ride K-12, to track bussing for students. Students have bus passes and scan on and off the bus.

29 The Transportation Department has 29 drivers/substitutes, a secretary, and a mechanic.



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APPLY HERE

Recently, the Norwalk Community School District Transportation department completed their annual “National School Bus Safety Week”, which culminated in safety checks at each of the school buildings to ensure students knew how to safely exit the bus should an emergency occur.

Norwalk Schools employs over 20+ staff members in their Transportation department, with positions ranging from bus drivers to a certified mechanic. The District is currently seeking candidates for bus drivers, substitute bus or van drivers, and substitute transportation paraeducators.

As a substitute driver, times can vary and could include morning and afternoon routes, as well as evening or weekend routes to assist with activity needs.

Two of our drivers shared how they decided to become a bus driver and what they enjoy most about their job. Our first driver stated, “Back in 2018, I was thinking about retirement when COVID came along and basically forced me into retirement. My wife and I were sitting on our porch discussing what I was going to do to keep busy and my wife suggested that I drive a bus for the district because there was such a need for drivers. Now I’ve been driving for seven years."

"That turned out to be one of the best decisions I’ve made. I really enjoy the students on my morning and afternoon routes. My riders ask me if I like driving the bus and I tell them, 'Yes, I do because I get to meet them.' When you are on my bus, you are one of my kids. I try very hard to learn each name so I can greet them with a smile and call them by their name. I also pride myself on having the cleanest bus in the fleet!"

"I have a lot of fun driving to events and the sporting activities I get assigned to. The kids keep me young at heart and the respect they give me is overwhelming. If anyone is thinking about driving the bus, I highly recommend it! It’s a great part time job!”

Another bus driver shared, “I don’t know if anyone wakes up one day thinking, 'I want to be a school bus driver.' It wasn’t in my life’s plan, but my path led me here, and I’m genuinely grateful for it. I take pride in what I do; the responsibility of driving the children in our community to and from school safely. I want every student who gets onto my bus to feel safe, seen, and cared for. I truly enjoy seeing all the different faces, all the different conversations, and caring for the kids as if my own. As the first and last person they interact with during their school day, making sure they start and end it with kindness matters a lot to me.”

If you are interested in any of the District’s Transportation positions and the requirements of these positions, please visit www.norwalkschools.org.

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Grieving?

Know someone who is?

When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our Surviving the Holidays seminar helps participants discover:

- How to deal with emotions
- What to do about traditions
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- How to find hope for the future

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