

WEST DES MOINES
JORDAN CREEK

SEPTEMBER 2026

Living

MAGAZINE

From dream to reality

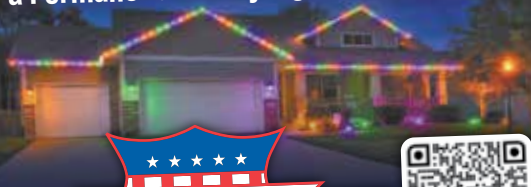
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WELCOME

TURN OFF the YouTube video

There is something wonderfully American about looking at a home improvement project and thinking, "How hard could it really be?" Usually, the answer is: Much harder than you think.

The internet has convinced us we can do almost anything ourselves. Videos show us how to install tile, replace a toilet, build a deck, hang drywall, repair a roof and rewire a house. In most cases, the instructors make it look easy. That's because those instructors know what they are doing.

I once watched a video about replacing a kitchen faucet. The guy demonstrated the entire process in six minutes. Turn off the water. Disconnect a couple of pipes. Install the new faucet. Tighten everything. Turn the water back on. Six minutes.

What the video didn't show was the next eight hours of my life, during which I discovered that the previous homeowner apparently believed plumbing was a competitive sport involving rust, corrosion and fittings that had been tightened with a tractor.

And then there is the hardware store. Every DIY project eventually requires at least three trips. The first is for the materials you think you need. The second is for the materials you actually need. The third is because you bought the wrong materials the second time. By the end, you have spent \$347 on a project that was supposed to cost \$40.

This is when a professional begins to look less like an unnecessary expense and more like a bargain. Professionals have experience. They know which tools to use, which shortcuts are legitimate and which shortcuts will eventually involve water pouring through your ceiling. They also know when a problem is bigger than the original project. That last part is important.

There is nothing wrong with doing simple projects yourself. But when a project involves anything that could result in a call to your insurance company, it may be time to turn off the YouTube video.

Yes, there is a certain satisfaction in fixing something yourself, but there is an even greater satisfaction in knowing you didn't make it worse. Sometimes the smartest DIY decision is recognizing that the best tool for the job is your phone with a professional on the other end. ■

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From dream to reality

Residents reimagine their homes to fit their lives.

By Jackie Wilson

Home improvement projects are often about much more than a few repairs, fresh paint and new appliances. They are about creating living spaces that fit the owners' needs, style and desire for a home that is "just right." Residents share how their renovations made their dreams into a reality.

Kay and Terry Harding of West Des Moines gutted their kitchen and tore out the dining room wall to add a pantry and extra kitchen space with a large center island.

FEATURE



AFTER

Kay and Terry Harding made their kitchen more spacious by removing a pantry wall and made it more functional with a larger island for additional seating.

An open and brighter kitchen

Terry and Kay Harding's West Des Moines home is a typical "Des Moines" layout, with a dining room, kitchen and drop-down family room. Yet the dining room seemed like a wasted space, as they rarely used it.

As their daughters grew up and grandchildren began visiting, Kay wanted a kitchen with a large center island for cooking and additional seating.

The couple called on Red House Remodeling, which had remodeled practically every room in their home.

"We love their work. They communicate and show up when they say they will. We have worked with others who don't get back to us," Kay said.

A designer helped with their vision of expanding the kitchen, which required taking out the dining room wall to open the space. A hidden area — a walk-in pantry located in a portion of the former dining room — is a favorite spot. The dining room window now offers even more light for the expanded kitchen.

Kay's center island dream became a reality. The island does not have a cooktop, which was moved to the wall. The island serves as a table and a cooking prep area — exactly what she has wanted for years.

"Now we have chairs and seating. My island has nothing on it, and I like it," she said.

Cabinets underneath the island, with pullout drawers, make it easy to store kitchen items. One unique feature is that her stand mixer is stored under the island on a shelf that can be raised to counter height, avoiding the need to lift the heavy appliance.

The railing next to the family room was also removed, adding to the openness.

The kitchen is set to be featured in the Tour of Remodeled Homes Oct. 3-4 as the No. 7 Red House Remodeling project.

With the latest improvements, the couple's remodeling plans are nearly complete.

"We're on the tail end of our projects. We might redo a deck in the future," Terry said. "We're staying in our house, so we might as well finally have it the way we want."

BEFORE



More outdoor living

Emily and Tim Mayfield of West Des Moines enjoy entertaining outdoors with family and friends. Yet their outdoor deck facing west got too much hot sun, along with pesky bugs.

Chatting with their neighbors, Ben and Steph Trannel, owners of Red House Remodeling, the Mayfields made plans to make better use of the space by turning it into a three-season porch.

"Ben gave us some incredible ideas for our outdoor space," Emily said.

Their initial plan was to replace the weathered wooden deck, yet the project ballooned into adding other outdoor amenities.

The first task was tearing down the old deck and putting up a three-season enclosed patio on the top level. They expanded the deck past a master bedroom and four-season room, which tripled their outdoor living space. They now have room for an eight-person patio table and two casual seating areas. Overhead fans cool the space, while space heaters provide an extra month or two of outdoor living in late fall and early spring.

FEATURE

BEFORE



Emily's favorite spot is in the patio, where she plays mahjong with a group of friends. The weekly mahjong gathering is named "Tuesdays on the Porch."

The family installed a pickleball court a few years ago, so the patio also serves as an overlook where parents can keep watch from the upper deck, while kids often gather on the lower patio or court.

Another addition just a few steps down is a swim spa. This space-saving pool provides jets for lap and walk swimming, yet doesn't have the upkeep of a regular swimming pool. The swim spa is covered with a pergola that opens

AFTER



Emily and Tim Mayfield enjoy their three-season porch, which is enclosed and cooler than their previous porch. Photo by Jackie Wilson

and closes for sun or shade on both the top and sides.

The lower walkout patio was formerly a concrete slab. The Mayfields put in poured

concrete, which was stamped and painted.

"That way, there is no upkeep of individual stones. It's easy to clean, with no grass growing between it. We're so happy we did



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FEATURE



AFTER

Emily and Tim Mayfield replaced their deck with three distinct outdoor spaces that allow them to enjoy the space in a variety of weather.

that,” Emily said.

The couple, formerly from Kansas City, moved to West Des Moines in 2011. At one point, they searched for other homes, but they are fond of their neighborhood and didn’t want to move.

“We agreed to make it what we want, instead of building in a new area,” Emily said, adding how little maintenance the deck requires

and how it all melds together with their family and social lives.

She is thankful for her neighbors’ expert guidance.

“They were upfront and made our living space what we dreamed of. We can’t thank them enough. They helped make it a reality,” Emily said. “It’s amazing out here. We can’t believe we waited this long to do it.”

Water damage inspires project

Nick and Lily Alexander’s West Des Moines basement was dated when they moved into their home in 2023. They liked the location and the home’s layout, and both agreed they could remodel as soon as funds became available.

Yet that time came earlier than expected when a sump pump failed and water flooded

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BEFORE



AFTER



Lily and Nick Alexander of West Des Moines remodeled their entire basement after it received flood damage. Photo by Jackie Wilson

BEFORE



the basement, ruining every inch of space.

“We wanted to remodel eventually, but it wasn’t our priority. This quickly moved up the list,” Nick said.

Their first priority was to waterproof the basement to prevent future damage. They hired Iowa Foundation Repair, which installed modifications, including adding covers to egress windows, expanding gutters and installing sump pumps.

When it came time to remodel, they called on Aaron Hansen of Hansen Home Remodeling in West Des Moines. Hansen had previously helped with a kitchen remodel, and they trusted his work and vision.

With the basement structure ruined, the first task was to rip up the floors. As the couple both work from home, a basement space for Lily’s office was a must.

“It’s nice. I could finally pick out the colors for my space,” she said.

Another requirement for her office was a doggy door for their pet.

“We both work from home, and if we have our doors shut, the dog paws at the door. It’s distracting during meetings,” Lily said.

AFTER



Lily and Nick Alexander chose new colors for their bathroom remodel. Photo by Jackie Wilson

They finally painted over the deep purple basement wall and replaced dated dark cabinets. They also replaced air ducts, rerouted vents and added a drop-down ceiling. The electrical box was reorganized.

A new bathroom and a guest bedroom rounded out the remodel.

“I liked that I could pick out my own finishes and fixtures,” Lily said.

Hansen also plumbed the spot for a bar, which is next up on their project list.

The Alexanders say they feel at ease when it rains, knowing the basement is protected. A second sump pump with a battery backup and a sump pump app monitors the water pumping.

After a heavy August rain, it pumped out 8,000 gallons of water in two days.

“We feel confident we will stay dry — even with the flash flood warnings,” Nick said.

For the Hardings, Mayfields and Alexanders, remodeling was about making their homes work better for the lives they live today. Whether creating a more functional kitchen, transforming an underused outdoor space or turning a damaged basement into a comfortable living area, each project brought new life to an existing home. With thoughtful planning, trusted contractors and a clear vision, these homeowners discovered that sometimes the best place to build something new is right where you already live. ■

TRUSTS for special needs dependents

Nearly 30% of families have a member with special needs. Many special needs children will be dependent on others their entire lives. It is crucial to have a plan in place that protects their long-term financial security.

Leaving an inheritance directly to a special needs dependent may put the individual at risk of losing eligibility for government benefits. The creation of a special needs trust can provide for dependents as long as they live, rather than leaving money directly to the dependent or another family member. The trust is an entity in which a family can set aside funds specifically for the care of the special needs dependent.

Trusts set up specifically for special needs dependents can help ensure that their inheritance does not jeopardize eligibility for those payments. Special needs trusts limit how the money in them can be used and keeps the beneficiary eligible for SSI and Medicaid.

Trusts created with the dependent's assets are designed for special needs dependents who come into money through inheritance or a lawsuit. They are designed to ensure that money does not jeopardize eligibility for government benefits. However, under the terms of these types of trusts,



when the dependent dies, the state Medicaid agency receives any money left in the trust for any support the state provided to the dependent.

Trusts created with assets from parents or grandparents solve the problem of people who want to leave money for a special needs dependent but don't want that person to lose out on government benefits. The trust can be established by a will or created during the benefactor's lifetime. The trustee cannot give money directly to the dependent but can pay for certain items and services not covered by monthly SSI income. Upon the death of the dependent, whatever assets are left in the trust can be distributed according to the creator's wishes as specified in the terms of the trust.

A sound, up-to-date estate plan is important for every adult, but it is absolutely essential for people who have dependents with special needs. All estate plans need to evolve over time to keep pace with changes in people's lives and financial situations. Update your plan periodically with an attorney who specializes in estate planning and special-needs clients. ■

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

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MEET Aziz Haffar

Valley boys soccer coach creates legacy of leadership and state titles.

When Valley High School soccer coach Aziz Haffar first learned soccer in his native Ghana, he played on any surface, often barefoot, whether it was sand, grass or gravel. His neighborhood soccer team walked to different villages to play matches.

He played soccer day in and day out and admired professional league players. Soccer is important in Ghana, and he fully embraced it as both a spectator and a player.

After leaving Ghana in 1980, he played for a club team in Missouri. He frequently sat on the bench, but his team made it into the top 20. After playing soccer, a friend suggested he apply for a coaching position in Iowa, where he coached at Southeast Polk High School for five years.

Success came quickly, and, in 1995, Valley recruited Haffar to coach the boys soccer team. His impact has been remarkable. Under his leadership, Valley has captured six state titles and 25 conference championships. Haffar was named National Coach of the Year in 2025 and has earned Regional Coach of the Year honors numerous times. He recently celebrated his 600th career win at Valley, while nine of his players have been named Gatorade Player of the Year.

Recently, his team from 30 years ago got together to honor the 1996 team, which was ranked No. 1 in the country. Reconnecting with the players was impactful.

"All of these men have grown and become wonderful citizens, along with their wives and kids. Seeing the impact I made, makes my day," he said.

As a soccer fan, Haffar eagerly awaited the 2026 World Cup, played in the United States. His home country of Ghana was set to play, and friends asked him if he was going. He told them no because it was too expensive.

The next day, his assistant coach called him to the locker room, making up a story about needing help. His son was there, along with a television camera crew. He was told the crew was filming Valley's construction. When he walked onto the field, soccer families were smiling and awaiting his arrival. The families had raised enough money for tickets and spending money for him to attend the World Cup in Kansas City.

"I had tears in my eyes," he said. "I was humbled and overwhelmed by families who gave me the tickets. I felt so blessed by how generous they were."

As he continues his soccer legacy, Haffar has no plans to retire after coaching for 36 years. He sees coaching as a group effort involving players and parents, along with fellow coaches and staff.

"The impact on kids I'll never know," he said. "Coaching isn't about wins and losses. I want to teach kids to be grateful and good citizens. It takes an effort to take life lessons learned in soccer. By supporting each other, it makes everyone successful." ■



Valley High School's soccer coach Aziz Haffar was treated to a trip to the World Cup to see Ghana, where he grew up, play.

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COFFEE CATS facilitates 2,124 adoptions

Partnership with Animal Rescue League helps felines find homes.

Valley Junction in West Des Moines is home to antique stores, specialty gift shops and restaurants, where you can purchase a weathered beer sign, order a pizza or adopt a cat while drinking a latte.

The cat — and the coffee — can be found at Coffee Cats, Iowa's first cat café, which opened in 2020. Since opening, the café has adopted out 2,124 cats.

The café is an extension of the Animal Rescue League and serves as a foster home. Cats brought into local ARL offices are selected to hang out at the café for possible adoption. Cats come ready for adoption and are fully vaccinated and spayed or neutered.

Coffee Cats gives cats a break from staying in cages and potential adopters the chance to play with cats in a casual setting, similar to a "giant living room."

Patrons pay a fee to enter the lounge, which includes cat towers and perches, plus seating for the humans. A bird feeder in the sunny front window provides cat entertainment. There is room for 12 cats in the cat lounge, and patrons can sip java while a cat sits contentedly on your lap.

Sara Carlson, social media marketing manager, says a wide range of people come in for a cat fix.

"We have people from senior homes, college students, bridal parties, teenagers and families. We've seen every age," she said. "We have others who live with a person who has a cat allergy, so they come here. Visitors from out of town stop in."

On the café side, patrons sit at tables in a sunny room with a glass window to view cats for free. Creations such as Peppermint Meow Mocha are available, along with grab and go vegan and vegetarian items. They offer local menu items, such as coffee from Grounds For Celebration, pastries from Highland Park Bakery and Pies and Pastries by Lana.

Special needs employees are hired and trained in barista skills and assist with cat care.

"Some have fallen through the cracks with employment," says Coffee Cats owner Mary Jankowski. "We give them a chance to feel like a real employee."

A wide variety of cat items for both humans and cats are for sale from local artists.



Coffee Cats owner Mary Jankowski is glad to help cats find good homes.



Sara Carlson says a wide variety of people enjoy stopping in for a cat fix.



Photos of the cats adopted through Coffee Cats are posted in the lounge.



Coffee Cats partners with the Animal Rescue League to facilitate adoptions.

The walls are filled with photos of adopted cats.

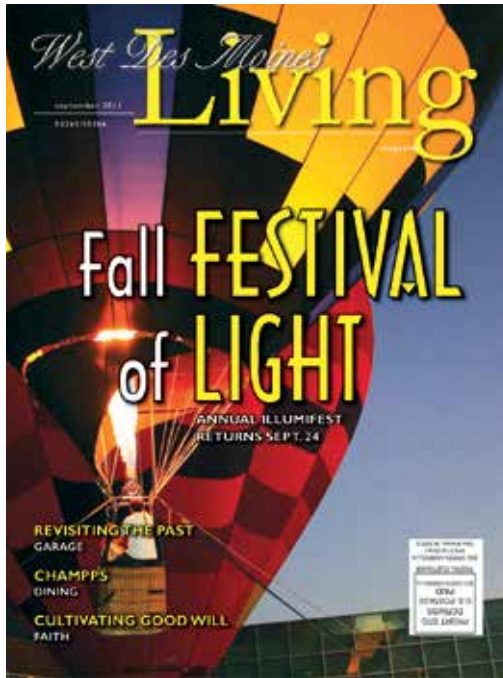
Visitors don't need a reservation for the café side. However, reservations are encouraged to get a 15- or 30-minute time slot for cuddling with cats in the lounge side.

Jankowski, who has adopted six cats, said, "On my drive home, I see stray cats. If they were at the Cat Café, we could have adopted them. It's gratifying to take care of cats here."

Find Coffee Cats at 312 Fifth St. or, for reservations, visit www.coffeecatscafe.com. ■

LOOKING BACK

The **September 2011 West Des Moines Living** magazine featured the story, "Fall Festival of Light: Annual Illumifest returns Sept. 24." The story began, "A Fall Festival of Light," returns for its fourth year on Saturday, Sept. 24, in West Des Moines and is expected to attract thousands of residents to the West Des Moines City School Campus, located at 4200 Mills Civic Parkway, with an array of free, family-oriented activities designed to appeal to fans of all ages." ■



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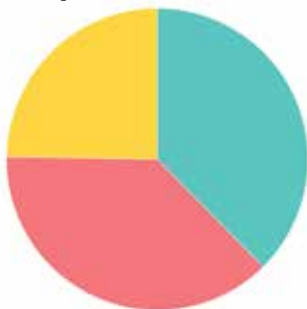
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WHEN SHOULD you consider palliative or hospice care?

For families supporting someone with a serious illness, questions about care often emerge gradually. A difficult symptom becomes harder to control. Medical appointments begin to take more energy. A loved one starts talking less about getting better and more about wanting to feel better.

Those changes can signal time to learn more about palliative or hospice care. Although the two types of care share an emphasis on comfort and quality of life, they are designed to meet different needs.

Look at what matters now: One place to begin is by considering how illness is affecting everyday life. Has pain, fatigue, nausea, shortness of breath or another symptom begun interfering with daily activities? Is a loved one struggling emotionally with the demands of treatment? Are family members having a difficult time coordinating care and understanding the choices ahead? Those concerns are worth discussing even when treatment for the illness is continuing.

Palliative care can accompany treatment: A person does not need to be approaching the end of life to benefit from palliative care. This specialized care can be introduced at any point during a serious illness, including while someone is receiving treatment intended to cure the illness or slow its progression.

The support provided depends on the person and situation. Managing pain and other symptoms might be part of the plan, along with medication assistance and emotional, spiritual or counseling support. Palliative care professionals also can help individuals and families sort through complex medical information, identify priorities and communicate those priorities with other members of the care team.

Depending on available services, palliative care may be provided in a person's home, hospital, clinic or residential setting. Insurance coverage varies according to factors including diagnosis, location, services and individual plans.

Hospice shifts the focus of care: When an illness is no longer being treated with the goal of a cure, hospice offers another approach, this one centered on comfort, dignity and quality of life.

Hospice eligibility generally requires a health care provider to determine that a person may have six months or fewer to live if the illness progresses as expected. Services can include nursing and personal care, management of pain and other symptoms, medical equipment and emotional and spiritual support. Hospice also supports family members and others close to the individual.

Importantly, hospice is not limited to a particular place. Services can be provided wherever someone calls home, whether that is a private residence, a community for older adults, or a family member's home. It also can be provided in some hospitals and hospice centers. Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance may cover hospice services depending on eligibility and plan requirements.

A trusted health care provider can help determine whether palliative care, hospice care, or support of another kind best fits the person's condition, priorities and needs. ■



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LAST MONTH'S PHOTO was of the horses outside of P. F. Chang's at Jordan Creek Town Center, correctly identified by: Jeanne Lyle. ■

NEWS BRIEF

MANY HANDS Thrift Market opens at Jordan Creek

Many Hands Thrift Market held a grand opening for its new Jordan Creek location, 6920 EP True Parkway, West Des Moines, on Wednesday, Aug. 26.

"Our thrift markets are more than just places to shop. They're a way for our community to create lasting impact," Tyler Kamerman, chief development officer with Many Hands, said. "We're excited to welcome the West Des Moines community and celebrate this new location together."

Shoppers will find an ever-changing selection of gently used clothing, home décor, household items, books, toys and other unique treasures. To maximize floor space for clothing and home goods, the Jordan Creek location does not sell furniture. ■

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A FRESH twist on bruschetta

We recently had an impromptu dinner with a few neighbors. I fired up the grill and made chicken skewers. One friend arrived with a delicious pasta salad (you'll be seeing that recipe in a future column), and another brought homemade bruschetta.



That bruschetta completely stole my heart, or taste buds would be more accurate. Fresh, garden-ripe tomatoes, onion, garlic and basil with just the right balance of flavors that came together in every bite. It was simple, fresh and irresistible. I found myself going back for "just one more scoop" more times than I would like to admit.

Naturally, I started searching for new ways to enjoy those same fresh flavors. That's when I discovered whipped feta bruschetta dip, and I knew I had to try it. Because if classic bruschetta is already delicious, what could possibly make it better? A creamy, tangy layer of whipped feta, of course! It takes everything we love about traditional bruschetta and adds a rich, velvety twist that is perfect for sharing at your next gathering — or keeping all to yourself. I won't judge. Enjoy! ■

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

Whipped feta bruschetta dip

BRUSCHETTA TOPPING:

- 1 cup grape tomatoes, diced
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Ground pepper to taste

WHIPPED FETA DIP:

- 1 cup feta crumbles
- 1 cup nonfat, plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Zest from 1 lemon
- 1 garlic clove
- 2-3 teaspoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Balsamic glaze
- Fresh basil leaves
- Crostini slices

DIRECTIONS:

- Mix together tomatoes, garlic, basil, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. Set aside.



- Mix feta, yogurt, olive oil, lemon zest, garlic and lemon juice in a food processor. Blend until combined and well mixed. Add salt and pepper and process again.
- Spread whipped feta into a shallow dish. Spoon bruschetta topping over the dip, careful not to add too much excess liquid.
- Drizzle balsamic glaze over all and place fresh basil leaves sporadically.
- Serve with crostini slices.

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WHY MEDIA audits matter: How many people does your ad reach?

When you invest in advertising, one of the most important questions to ask is also one of the simplest: How many people will actually see, hear or engage with my ad?

An advertising audit is one way media companies and advertisers can answer that question. An audit independently researches and verifies the audience of a specific media outlet, whether that is a magazine, newspaper, radio station, television program, website or other advertising platform. Depending on the medium, an audit may measure readership, circulation, listenership, viewership, website traffic or other audience information.

Why does this matter to an advertiser? Because an ad's value is closely connected to the audience it has the opportunity to reach. Knowing the size of an audience provides an important piece of information when evaluating



different advertising options and determining where an advertising budget may be most effectively spent.

But audience size is only part of the equation. Who is seeing your advertising can be just as important as how many people see it. Demographics, household characteristics, geographic location, interests and purchasing behaviors can help advertisers determine whether a particular audience aligns with the customers they want to reach.

Audits can also provide greater transparency. Rather than relying solely on estimates, claims or assumptions, audited information gives advertisers data they can use when comparing media. It can help answer questions such as: How large is the audience? How often are they exposed to the medium? Where do they live? What types of households or consumers make up the audience?

For businesses, this information can lead to more informed advertising decisions. A media platform with a large audience isn't necessarily the right choice for every advertiser,

just as a smaller, highly targeted audience isn't necessarily less valuable. The right media depends on the business, its goals and the customers it is trying to reach.

Ultimately, an audit is about accountability and informed decision-making. Advertising is an investment, and businesses deserve to understand the audience behind that investment. Before choosing where to place an ad, consider not only what the advertising costs, but also how many people it reaches, who those people are and how that audience is measured. The Living magazines are audited. Ask us for a copy today.

The better you understand the audience, the better equipped you are to make thoughtful advertising decisions. ■

Information provided by Mikala Goemaat, Advertising Account Executive, Big Green Umbrella Media, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, Iowa 50131, 515-953-4822 x308, mikala@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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MIKALA GOEMAAT

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HEATING & COOLING

By Dale Adams

WHERE SHOULD you install a ductless heat pump system?

Many central Iowa homeowners have one or two rooms that never seem to stay comfortable, no matter how well the main HVAC system is running. Upstairs bedrooms may become too warm during the summer, while finished basements often stay cooler than the rest of the house. Garages, sunrooms and home additions can also present heating and cooling challenges because they were not designed with the home's original ductwork in mind.



A ductless heat pump offers a practical solution for these spaces by providing targeted heating and cooling exactly where it is needed. Rather than replacing an existing HVAC system, a mini split works alongside it to improve comfort in specific areas. This approach allows homeowners to address problem rooms without making major changes to the rest of the home's heating and cooling system.

One of the most common locations for ductless heat pump installation is an upstairs room that remains too hot in the summer or too cold during the winter. Heat naturally rises, and some homes have uneven airflow, making it difficult for upper floors to maintain a consistent temperature. A properly placed ductless system helps create a more balanced indoor environment throughout the year.

Garages are another popular choice, especially when they are used as workshops, home gyms, or hobby spaces. Traditional HVAC systems often do not serve attached garages, making them uncomfortable during Iowa's seasonal temperature swings. A ductless heat pump can provide reliable heating and cooling without requiring extensive remodeling or new ductwork.

Finished basements also benefit from targeted climate control. Because they are partially below ground, these spaces can have different temperature and humidity conditions than the main living areas. A mini split helps maintain consistent comfort for everyday use.

Sunrooms and enclosed patios often experience dramatic temperature fluctuations throughout the year due to large windows and increased sun exposure. These rooms may become too warm in summer and difficult to heat in winter. Installing a ductless heat pump allows homeowners to use these spaces more comfortably during every season.

Home additions are another excellent application for ductless heat pumps. Extending existing ductwork into a new room can be expensive and may place additional strain on the home's primary HVAC system. A ductless solution provides independent climate control while avoiding many of the complications associated with expanding traditional duct systems.

The best location for a ductless heat pump depends on where your home experiences the greatest comfort challenges, not simply where there is available wall space.

Selecting the right installation location also involves considering airflow, room size, ceiling height and how the space is used throughout the day. A qualified HVAC professional can evaluate these factors to determine the placement that delivers the most efficient and even performance.

The most successful ductless mini-split installations focus on solving specific comfort problems with both supplemental and whole home HVAC needs. By targeting areas where traditional systems struggle, homeowners can enjoy more consistent temperatures, improved efficiency and greater comfort without extensive renovations. ■

At Triple A Home Services, we're here to assist you in making your dream home not just beautiful, but safe and comfortable as well. Dale Adams has over 40 years of experience as a Master Mechanical Contractor. Do you still have questions? Visit www.tripleahomeservices.com for additional information. Dale loves to answer questions. Give him a call at 515-868-2779 Ext.1.

WELLNESS

By Stephanie Woodard

BENEFITS of IV therapy

IV therapy has gained significant popularity as a wellness treatment offering a direct route to deliver essential nutrients, vitamins and hydration directly into the bloodstream. This method bypasses the digestive system, ensuring maximum absorption and immediate benefits.

The benefits of IV therapy are diverse. It can provide rapid hydration, which is crucial for overall health, and can alleviate symptoms of dehydration like fatigue and headaches. IV therapy also supports the immune system by delivering immune-enhancing vitamins directly to cells. Furthermore, it can enhance energy levels by providing essential nutrients that support cellular energy productions.

There are many kinds of IVs, and they can often be customized upon request. Here are a few you might want to check out: **Myers** – Alleviate chronic inflammation, muscle pain, fatigue and stress with this blend of multi vitamins and essential hydration. **Shield** – Boost your immune system if you are feeling under the weather. **Refuel** – Multiple vitamins and amino acids to assist with the flushing of lactic acid and toxins while increasing athletic performance, cardiovascular health, muscle recovery and hydration and combating fatigue. **Detoxify** – Recuperate your hangover with our special cocktail to treat nausea, dehydration and headaches. **Glow** – Your beauty go-to that fights free radicals and improves vital organ defense. Enhance and regenerate your glow. **Young** – The ultimate IV cocktail that combines all essential vitamins and nutrients into one treatment. ■

Information provided by Stephanie Woodard, 4 Ever Young, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Waukeez, 515-304-2324. www.4everyyoungantiaging.com



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HEALTH

By Mary Doherty, LISW

VULNERABILITY

I have been reading the book “The ABC’s of Self Love” by Melody Godfred and came across the letter V for Vulnerability. This word stuck with me as therapists expect from clients, at some point, to be vulnerable and share who they are, what they are feeling and their thoughts. I often joke with my clients that met me 30 seconds ago, that it is OK to not want to be vulnerable that quickly. However, that is what we expect in therapy and what is needed for it to truly work. Why are we more likely to be vulnerable with a complete stranger than with others in our lives? Is it because therapists, doctors, etc. are professionals? Why do we, as humans, need someone to have a specific title to share our vulnerabilities?

I want you to think of the last time you were vulnerable. How did that feel? Who were you vulnerable with? Now think of the last time you could have been vulnerable but were not. Why weren't you vulnerable at that moment? Who were you not vulnerable with? Sometimes vulnerability feels like this scary thing where we might as well be naked in front of a room of people. That does not have to be the case though. It could be a moment where you share hard news with someone, ask for help, cry or even tell someone you like them. We have a fear as a society about how we are perceived and what others will think of us. What if, instead of that being your first thought, you challenged yourself by asking: What could go right if I am vulnerable, even just a little, in this moment? ■



Information provide by Mary Doherty, LISW, Renewed Strength Counseling, 2910 Westown Parkway, Suite 314, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-809-2419.

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HUNTER makes a difference at the library

Volunteers weekly to gather books for patrons and help with the book sale

For nearly a decade, Joni Hunter has volunteered her time at the West Des Moines Public Library. As a longtime library supporter, she jumped at the opportunity to volunteer to pull books for patrons through the Pull List.

"After I retired, I was in the library, and one of the librarians asked if I would be willing to volunteer," she said. "I said yes, and I have had a standing Thursday morning appointment each week ever since."

When library patrons go online and request a book, it goes on a list. As a volunteer, Hunter finds the requested books on the shelves, pulls them, prepares them for pickup and takes them to staff members, who log them and contact the patron when they are ready for pickup.

"I arrive around 9 in the morning and find my list to pull for the day," she said. "It might be 35 books, or it might be 95 books. It just depends on the day. I grab my iPad and start looking for them. Pull lists contain things from every corner of the library. It usually takes me about an hour and a half."

More recently, Hunter has added another element to her library volunteer work. While working on her Pull List tasks, she noticed stacks of books in the back of the library and wondered if the board needed



Joni Hunter receives the Neighbor Spotlight award from Ryan Mehalovich, Edward Jones.

help. She then joined the Friends of the Library Board to assist with its book sale efforts.

One of her main objectives since joining the board this past July has been to help with the ongoing book sale for which the board is responsible.

"People make donations of books all the time, though I've noticed that it is cyclical, like during spring cleaning," she said. "The library also does a clean out of books sometimes, like books that have been on the shelf a long time and haven't been checked out. We sort through them and get them prepared to go out for the sale."

In addition to the ongoing book sale, the Friends of the Library Board holds an advertised and promoted book sale once a year. Hunter plans to participate in getting books ready for that sale, too.

Hunter said being an avid reader contributes to her joy in volunteering at the library.

"It is interesting to see what kinds of books people select from the sale," she said. "Reading has always been very important to me. It opens up opportunities and adventures for people. It is hard to put into words what a library means to me."

Hunter said libraries offer many valuable services that patrons may not even realize. From offering high-energy kids' programs, Books on Wheels, the Outbound Program for seniors and the kiosk in Valley Junction to serving as a cooling center in the heat of summer, the West Des Moines Public Library benefits the community in a wide variety of ways.

Hunter enjoys seeing the library used for a wide array of things, and she likes seeing people appreciate and enjoy the space. Personally, she enjoys helping patrons who are looking for books in the stacks and finds joy in recommending great books to read.

She is also glad people use the library space to tutor kids during the summer.

"It makes me smile," she said. "When parents are sitting and reading a book to their child, I think, 'That's what this is for.' I grew up where library visits meant 'whisper, whisper.' Now, it is not like that, especially when kids' programs are happening." ■


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Upcoming in the West Des Moines / Jordan Creek Living magazine:

Blood donors: Are you a blood donor? Have you had a personal experience with someone who needed a blood donation? Have you volunteered at blood drives? If you have been involved in any way, we would like to hear from you. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com and include your name and town of residence.

Veterans salutes: Submit your Veterans Profiles to Tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com. Include photo, name, town where you live, military branch, rank, enlistment dates, and answer to: "What would you like others to know about serving your country?"



Indoor Playground

Tuesdays and Thursdays, Oct. 6 - Dec. 17, 10 a.m. to noon

Valley Junction Activity Center,
217 Fifth St., West Des Moines

Looking to get your toddler, ages 4 and younger, out of the house to burn off some energy? Bring them to the free indoor play area filled with toys, slides and riding toys. Parents must stay and supervise their kids. Not available on WDMCS school-free days.

Autumn at the Amphitheater

Sunday evenings, 5-7 p.m.
Jamie Hurd Amphitheater,
4100 Mills Civic Parkway,
West Des Moines

Unwind in a picturesque natural setting while listening to talented local musicians. Food trucks will be available and guests are welcome to bring their own picnic baskets, blankets, family and friends. The lineup includes: Sept. 13, The Juan and Only; Sept. 20, Joshua Sinclair; Sept. 27, The Lamplighters; Oct. 4: Weary Ramblers; Oct. 11, Standing Hampton. Admission is free.

Grandparents Day Craft Craze: "Family Ties" Pillows

Sunday, Sept. 13, 1:30 to 3 p.m.
Valley Junction Activity Center,
217 Fifth St., West Des Moines

Ages 6 and older are invited to celebrate the special bond between generations. Grandparents and grandchildren can create a lasting keepsake pillow together. Snacks are provided. Cost is \$20 per grandparent/grandchild pair. Extra pillows can be added for \$8 each. At least one adult is required for every two grandchildren.

Parents' Night Out

Saturdays, Sept. 12 and 26,
Oct. 10, Nov. 7 and 21, and
Dec. 5, 5-8 p.m.
RecPlex, 6500 Grand Ave.,
West Des Moines

Give your kids, ages 5-12, a night packed with fun, featuring themed activities, arts and crafts, healthy games and a pizza party. Cost is \$25.

Jordan House Tours

Fridays and Sundays,
11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
Jordan House Museum,
2001 Fuller Road,
West Des Moines

Weekly guided tours are offered at the Jordan House. The cut off for purchasing tickets is noon Thursday for Friday tours and noon Friday for Sunday tours. If you have missed that cutoff, call 515-225-1286 to find out if walk-up tickets are available. To reserve a ticket, see the schedule and links at www.wdmhs.org/openhousevisit/. All tours will be guided by a docent. Arrive at the Jordan House Museum at least 10 minutes before the tour begins. The tour will involve taking stairs to the basement and the second floor, as well as walking and standing for at least one hour. If you have a group of eight or more, call to schedule a private tour.

2026 Des Moines Concours

Sunday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Pappajohn Sculpture Park, Western Gateway, Des Moines

The Des Moines Concours showcases carefully selected vintage, classic, exotic, motorcycle and special-interest vehicles that highlight the remarkable evolution of transportation design and engineering. Special featured classes for 2026 include a celebration of Pontiac's 100th Anniversary and a unique showcase of vehicles that inspired the beloved characters from Pixar's "Cars" movies. Guests can enjoy food trucks, local vendors, interactive exhibits, LEGO displays, radio-controlled car racing, educational presentations, photo opportunities and hands-on activities throughout the day. The weekend begins on Saturday evening, Sept. 12, with the Des Moines Concours Charity Gala at the Krause Gateway Center. Proceeds support Children's Cancer Connection and the Des Moines Concours Automotive Heritage Grant. For event details, Gala information, exhibitor applications, sponsorship opportunities and the latest updates, visit www.desmoinesconcours.com.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

Heritage Jubilee

Saturday, Oct. 3, 1-4 p.m.

Historic Jordan House, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Everyone is invited to an afternoon of hands-on learning and fun at the 2026 Jordan House Heritage Jubilee. Visitors will have the opportunity to hear the toe-tapping tunes of the Weary Ramblers on the Jordan House porch; walk in the footsteps of history during an Underground Railroad experience; make a wreath and learn how to use natural materials to dye fabric from the Polk County Master Gardeners; learn about Indigenous music and storytelling with Native Pride dance and drum crew; and crush apples, taste fresh cider, churn butter, make a rag doll and much more. Would you like to be part of the Jubilee? Individuals and groups are needed to help guide the visitors through the activities and help set up (including a tipi Friday) and tear down Saturday. Learn more at www.wdmhs.org/heritagejubilee.

Beaverdale Fall Festival

Sept. 18 and 19

Des Moines' Beaverdale neighborhood

The Beaverdale Fall Festival is turning up the heat this year with the addition of the Beaverdale Backyard BBQ, a professional competitive barbecue contest with big prizes and even bigger flavor, on Saturday, Sept. 19, with the theme "Beats and Bites." Festival-goers will have an opportunity to purchase a "Sampler Bundle," which includes samples from the competing teams, a Fareway side dish and a coupon for a free drink at the festival beer tent. Limited sampling wristbands will be available and will be sold online in advance or at the festival merchandise tent while supplies last. The Beaverdale Backyard BBQ joins a full lineup of Fall Festival favorites, including the Fall Festival Parade, live music, kids carnival, food trucks, commercial vendors and more running throughout the festival weekend.

Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show

Sunday, Sept. 20

Charlie's Filling Station,

305 Grand Ave.,

West Des Moines

www.friendlysonsiowa.com

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Bring your classic or unique vehicle. Registration is 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Trophies will be awarded at 3 p.m. Vendors and food will be available.



CITYVIEW's Martini Fest

Friday, Sept. 25, 5-9 p.m.

West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic Parkway,

West Des Moines

Enjoy CITYVIEW's Martini Fest, featuring 10 tickets for sample-size martinis at participating stops for \$25 (\$35 at the event). Visit <https://martinifest.dmcityview.com> for more information and to purchase tickets. ■



PLAN AHEAD

By Sarah Masteller

TIME to plan final arrangements

The fair is over, and the kids and grandkids are back to school. Life is back on schedule, and it feels good. Now that things are "back to normal," it is time to get those things done that you have put off these past few months.



One of those things might be addressing your final arrangements. We hear it all the time: "I am so glad to have this taken care of." I can certainly tell you that no one ever regrets that their loved one planned ahead when the time comes that the services of a funeral home are needed.

Planning your final arrangements begins with a simple conversation and can be a very pleasant process. Planning ahead also allows you time to give the thoughtful consideration that these important decisions deserve. There are many options to think about when addressing your final arrangements, and there are even prepayment options available to those who wish to have their final financial obligations handled in advance.

An advanced planning consultant can walk you through these choices and options.

Make it a goal to get this off your "to-do" list before the snow flies — or you fly south for the winter. Reach out to your funeral home of choice and schedule a meeting to get your prearrangements in place.

You will be glad you did...and so will your family. ■

Information provided by Sarah Masteller, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Southtown Funeral Home, 5400 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines, 515-697-3679.

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Tamas Toth and Bailey Zepeda



Kathy Uthe and Mark Courter



Eileen Boggess and Katherine Harrington



Tim Lamb and Patrick St. John



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Bonnie Byrnes and Kim Burkhead



Danielle Frye and Josh Frye



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OUT & ABOUT



Lesa Brill and Brooklyn Mclemore at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Lisa Krapfl and Katie Krapfl at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Arley, Jaime and Davis Beane at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Lacie Navin and Cooper at the Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Quinton Goemaat and Everest Goemaat at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Karley Miller and Zach Miller at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Matt Stigers and Nicole Stigers at Music in the Junction Aug. 20.



Kate Thompson and Maggie Herr at the West Des Moines Public Library.



Marlene Loecke and Sadagat Aliyeva at the West Des Moines Public Library.



Luke Gravelle and Alissa Gravelle at the West Des Moines Public Library.



Daxon Hemesath and Betsy Hemesath at the West Des Moines Public Library.



Mary Fowler, Mikala Goemaat and Martha Munro at Spare Time Aug. 26.

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