

## A Successful End to the 1st Journey



**Jason Folie**

By Mike Parry

Thought that it would be a good time to give an update on a Choroideremia journey that has just been completed by Jason Folie and Krista Kramer. I asked them to give us a summary of how the journey went. *(continued on page 5)*

## Providing Dignity & Honesty in a Time of Grief



By Mike Parry

Growing up in a Catholic family, I found myself at a young age an Altar Boy at St. Theodore's Catholic Church in Albert Lea. Yes, I learned Latin so as to participate in the services each Sunday. I remember at that time doing 4 of the Sunday morning services because one of the other Altar Boys didn't show up. I guess I really didn't mind as both of us for the most part sat during the service facing the congregation. I remember watching for different reactions to what the Priest was preaching about. I guess I must have been doing it right as I was called upon numerous times to be one of the




**Tim Dennis (left) and Sam Steffel (right)**

Altar Boys at many weddings and funerals. Weddings were always fun. Everyone smiling and so happy. Funerals on the other hand - sad, kind of gloomy. Quiet. Over my years on this earth, I've been to nu-


merous funerals and as I look back there has always been that key element that I'm sure everyone has noticed but really not given much thought to.

*(continued on page 4)*


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**PM & B**  
**PUMPS, MOTORS & BEARINGS**  
 By Mike Parry

Man, do I love meeting folks like Russ and Ashley Frederick. Entrepreneurs!!! Folks believing in Waseca and Waseca County!!! It just gets me excited when I have time to sit down and listen to their goals and aspirations. So, here's the story. Back in 2012 Russ and Ashley worked out an agreement with Vern Fette to purchase Vern's business when his health went south due to an injury. Or should I say that Ashley wanted to buy the business and now it's a woman owned business. So I asked them to tell me about the business. "We're moving from our home place in the county to the building right next to the Old Repnet building

on County Road 4." Said Ashley. "It was time as our space on our home property in the county was being out grown by both businesses." I, of course had no idea about the other company they owned so I asked, What other company? "In 2014 we started F2Trucking. There was work out there," said Russ, "so we started with 1 truck and now have 3 trucks and we are hauling all the time." OK I said so let's focus on Pumps, Motors & Bearings. Tell me more. "Well, when we were talking with Vern, we both agreed that we needed to take care of the farmers. We are in an agricultural area," said Russ. "When its harvest time and farmers have a motor go down, they need it fixed or replaced as soon as possible. That's what we do and have a short turn around time as well." Said Frederick. Ashley jumped in and stated, "If you have an electric motor and it's going bad, just call us and we will tell you whether we can fix it or if you'll have to replace it. Furnace fans, exhaust fans. If it's an electric motor

give us a call." So, what about pumps and bearings I asked. "Right now, we service many pumps. Parma Drainage Pumps for sure, covering Southern Minnesota, Northern Iowa and South Dakota." Stated Russ, "We also fix things like trailer lights, electric brakes and so on."

Ashley went on to say, "When spring planting and fall harvest happen, we want the farmers to know we are here 24/7."

(continued on page 3)



Russ and Ashley Frederick

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## Pumps, Motors & Bearings



(continued from page 2)

You can see more on their Facebook page. As we ended our talk, I asked Ashley just what she did? "I handle all aspects of the office and greet our customers in person or on the phone. As I told Russ, (she said with a smile) remember, I'm the Face of the Business and you're the Doer."

I'm excited for these two as they prepare to move their businesses to the south industrial site along County Road 4.

Pumps, Motors & Bearings along with F2Trucking can be reached at 507-835-9147 or for emergency service 507-461-2539. [f](#)



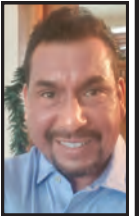
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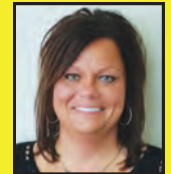
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## Providing Dignity & Honesty in a Time of Grief

(continued from page 1)

The Funeral Director and staff. Moving funeral goes this way and that way. Showing them where to sit or stand.

Then, escorting family and friends, along with the deceased, to the proper locations. All this with an air of professionalism, peacefulness, dignity and respect. You see this over and over again as you attend funerals throughout your lifetime. I guess I've thought about this more since the merger of our two local funeral homes, Dennis Funeral Home and Starkson & Steffel Funeral Home. I reached out to Tim Dennis and Sam Steffel and asked to sit down and talk about the merger. That, I was able to do after about a month or two.

After an hour-long visit with Tim and Sam, I realized that this Funeral Home business is 24/7 and there is no normal day. "One never knows when our services will be called upon," said Tim. So why the merger, I asked? "I came to Tim," said Sam, "My wife and I were expecting our first child and we were talking about how we do what we love to do, and be able to stay in Waseca for 30 years, raise a family and then retire? The fear we had watching other Funeral Directors



**Becky Dennis**

being on call and working 24/7 and getting burned out scared us. We didn't want to go down that path. We knew we had to do something. We needed to find a team to be part of and we've found that here with Tim." At this point Tim jumped in and said, "I think we're in a position to serve the communities the way they want to be served. To provide dignity, and honesty and upfront information. We have a group that supports each other and works well as a team." Both Tim and Sam agreed that the merger has given the entire team more flexibility and given them the needed time to rejuvenate and be with family. Tim reiterated a previous comment made. "I liked your question about what's the objective for us coming together. It's really not about us, it's about the communities. During our talks it was always about the communities. That was the primary emphasis." So, is there a name change in the future I asked? "The entity will be under Dennis



**Sarah Miller**



**Aaron Omtvedt**

As our conversation continued we talked about Pre-planning, pre-paid services and how you can find all the information on the web at [www.dennisfuneralhomes.com](http://www.dennisfuneralhomes.com) or you can call or stop in for information. If you have a question about anything involving services and what you can or can't do, please call 507-835-2190.

Funeral and Cremation Services," stated Dennis. "We have the 3rd Street Chapel here across from State Farm Insurance, The State Street Chapel

which is the old McRaith/Starkson-Steffel location, The Janesville Chapel and the Waterville Chapel."

# Dennis

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# A Successful End to the 1st Journey

(continued from page 1)

Here's what they had to say. "We left our house on January 4th and got home March 3rd. 34 days of actual riding. A few days off here and there. It was a lot colder than I wanted it to be. Some mornings when we woke up it was 28, but then would warm up to 60. California and Florida were nice. Louisiana is REALLY muggy, even in the winter. Depending on the wind and weather, I would ride anywhere from 5-8 hrs. Physically... none of it was really hard. The only thing that



## DINING IN THE DARK Dinner Event

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH  
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was frustrating was when my bike wasn't set up right and I kept getting hurt and riding with injuries. Emotionally, it was hard seeing someone older than me with CHM. People can tell you what your future will look like but it's another thing to actually see it. As far as the traffic was concerned, it was stressful to ride in. Getting up in the morning and getting on the bike in the cold was not easy. Meeting people was one of the fun parts. We met a lot of nice people and strangers who congratulated me and supported my cause. The support was beyond amazing. The amount of text messages, phone calls and Facebook messages was unbelievable. I can't believe that so

many people followed me and prayed for me. And so many people from the community supported me along the way. The fact that people keep telling me they're proud of me is very rewarding. The ride itself, to me, is just another day. The reason behind the ride is what holds meaning for me. I liked talking to people about the disease and raising awareness. I also loved that I had some friends at the end to congratulate me. That made it special."

What dedication Jason and Krista have. Make sure you have plans to be part of the Dining in the Dark Dinner Event March 28th.

See the ad to the left.



**TEAM  
Academy -  
High Performing  
School**



**By Jill Courtney,  
Director**



Last month I was asked to testify at the Senate E-12 Education Finance and Policy



Committee hearing on Beat the Odds/High Performing Schools. The committee identified schools that have above average concentrations of: students of color; free and reduced price lunch eligible students; Special Education students and English Language Learners – yet, have higher than average 3rd grade MCA Reading scores. TEAM Academy was one of these schools!

During my testimony I shared the following things that have helped us at TEAM:

- Consistency – we have a very low staff turnover rate
- Q-comp school since 2010 – we use the majority of our q-comp budget for staff development.
- Strong Intervention program using Title 1 and ADSIS funding
- Leadership team has developed practice profiles for read-

ing (lays out expectations during our reading block)

- Not all students learn during the school day - we have an After School Program & Summer School
- Take away barriers for students - All students have free breakfast, snack, lunch, and after school snack

*(continued on page 7)*

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**TEAM  
Academy -  
High Performing  
School**

*(continued from page 6)*

Perhaps the biggest reason we are successful is the community we have created at our school. Our staff members are in constant communication with one another and we know all students by name.



Lots of great things are always going on at TEAM Academy and we love to have visitors. We are a FREE (no cost) K-6 grade charter school located in Waseca.

**We are now enrolling students for the 20-21 school year! Our New Student Open House is coming up on Monday, March 23 from 5-6 PM.**

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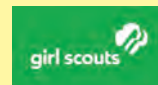
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"Seeing 20/20" is the theme for the Waseca Chorale's spring concert which will be held at 4:00 p.m., Sunday, April 19th in the Central Building Auditorium. With the year being 2020, the focus of the concert will be seeing with 20/20 vision. All of the songs center around eyes and vision. The concert will begin and end with songs performed by Louis Armstrong,

opening with "Jeepers Creepers" from the 1938 film Going Places and concluding with "What a Wonderful World" which Armstrong recorded in 1967. The audience will be entertained with many familiar songs, old and new. Melissa Schulz will be featured on the Annie Lennox song, "1000 Beautiful Things." Two of our newest members, Melanie Morrow and Gunnar Molstad will sing a duet on the song "I See the Light" from the Disney film Tangled. The 1991 Grammy Song of the Year, "From a Distance," will highlight the voice of Waseca Public Schools high school choir director, Deb Yess. "O Say Can You See," with an all new original melody to Francis Scott Key's words from The Star Spangled Banner, is a moving rendition of our national anthem. Those attending the

concert are sure to leave with clearer vision! Tickets for the concert are \$7 for adults and \$5 for youth ages 12 and under and are available from chorale members, at Waseca Music,

The Golden Touch Salon, and at the door. The concert is made possible in part by a grant from the E. F. Johnson Foundation.

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## New Members of the Waseca Chorale

**Melanie Morrow:** I grew up in a fairly musical family, singing with my mother and in church choirs. There's never been a time when music wasn't a part of my life! But performing took a back seat when I started having kids. Then I met Becky Borneke and that all changed! Singing in the group, In A Bind, has been such a blessing to me. It is a way that I recharge my mental battery. When Becky said she was going to join the chorale, I jumped at the chance to sing choir music again! Being in the chorale helps me to focus on areas vocally that I feel need strengthening, but also provides me with some self-care time each week. Singing makes me happy! Singing with other people that love singing is both challenging and incredibly fulfilling!

**Becky Borneke:** I performed my first solo when I was 12 at a school concert. That same year, I became a church organist and 2 years later, church choir director. High school and college were full of music opportunities so I did what came naturally...I became a music teacher for 32 years. During that time, I continued to accompany at church (40 years as a regular, the past 8 as a sub or for special occasions.)

I also performed on weekends with bands and formed a gospel group with some gals from Janesville. Since retiring, I have had an urge to do some choral singing. I currently perform with two other women in a group called In A Bind, but was looking for even more opportunities to sing harmonies and just enjoy the 'musical hug' you get from the camaraderie of a large choral group. The Waseca Chorale has an excellent reputation, as does their director, Irene Mulcahey. I had the opportunity to perform with Irene in WitnessHymn for 5 years and I have great respect for her talent, precision, and work ethic. I mentioned to the two ladies I currently perform with that I was looking to join the chorale. Tammy has an active high school age son so she declined but Melanie and I joined and are having a wonderful time. The music Irene chooses is challenging enough to make you work hard at rehearsals, but not so hard that you're stressing about it before you sing. The regulars are amazing singers and I am astounded by the quality! Definitely the experience I was looking for! Waseca is lucky to have such a wonderful opportunity for music lovers!

## Easter Dinner

for all Senior Citizens and those who find themselves alone for the holiday

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*1:00 pm*

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*308 N State Street, Waseca*

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# The Waseca Chorale

under the direction of Irene Mulcahey

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and at the door

**This performance of the Waseca Chorale is made possible in part by a grant from the E. F. Johnson Foundation**

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## Connections Over Coffee



By Mike Good

THE GRATITUDE SPARK  
— THE SPARK THAT CAN IGNITE CHANGE —

Coffee shops - they have become a staple in our society. Recently, I have come to really appreciate the coffee shops in our communities in southern Minnesota - it's where I tend to go when I write. From Starbucks to Caribou to Dunn Bros to all of the little mom and pop coffee shops - each offers something special to our communities. So here I am, sitting at one of our local coffee shops early on a Saturday morning, just soaking in the vibe. I have always read that there are things to be grateful for everywhere...at all times. So, I thought I'd just sit back and find things in my current environment for which I could be grateful.

My chai latte - yes, super grateful for my chai latte. I'm not a coffee drinker, so, this is the next best thing. Actually, in my mind, it's better than coffee, but, I say that at the risk of

offending all you coffee lovers who are probably rolling your eyes at me in disdain. The "busyness" of the coffee shop - yup, I love the fact that the employees seem to be having fun interacting with each other and with the customers - helping to ensure that we all have a really great experience. However, while the coffee, tea and specialty drinks are amazing and the bustle of the shop makes it feel alive, the thing that I have noticed that sets certain coffee shops apart from others are the people - the employees and the guests. That's what sticks out for me today - a group of men sitting over by the fireplace. I have been at this coffee shop on a Saturday morning before, and every time I'm here, they are here. I suspect it's a group who meets once a week just to catch up over a cup of coffee. Today, I can overhear a bit of their conversation. The beauty of it is that it's just about the little things, nothing earth shattering, just things like what happened yesterday, upcoming sporting events, local news.

As I dig into this a bit more deeply, I notice a few things which really stand out for me. First, their laughter. There honestly might not be anything much better than a really good belly laugh. I'm hearing those now from this group of guys. Second, what appears to be a genuine connection with one another. There are times when you can tell that people just genuinely enjoy being with each other. I'm witnessing that now. Third, a son. One of the men brought his son today. The best part, the son was wel-

comed just like an old friend and is taking part in the conversations just as the other long-timers.

It might be the little things that they talk about every Saturday morning, but, it's no secret that those little things are the things that become the big things. This regular meeting of friends is probably a small part of their weekly routine, but, I have no doubt it will be something for which they are truly grateful - either now or in time. In fact, I am thankful for just having the opportunity to witness their connection.

I think that's something that we all could stand to do a little more often - seek out connections. Sometimes all it takes is a quick phone call to a friend with whom you've not spoken to for some time. Maybe it's a pit stop on your next neighborhood walk to chat with a neighbor with whom you haven't had a chance to speak to recently because of your busy schedules. Perhaps you can strike up a conversation with a stranger - who knows, that out-of-the-blue in-

roduction might turn into a recurring opportunity to build that connection at your local coffee shop every Saturday morning. Whatever it is - the friend, the neighbor, the stranger - I suspect you will look back at that connection with a true sense of gratitude.

Happy "connecting" this month friends...

*Mike Good, creator of The Gratitude Spark, resides in Chaska, MN. He is passionate about living life through the lens of gratitude and helping individuals and organizations spark incredible positive change through the power of a grateful mindset. If you're interested in learning more about the power of gratitude and how it can help to spark a change in your life and in the lives of those around you, feel free to contact Mike via email at [mike@thegratitudespark.com](mailto:mike@thegratitudespark.com). You can also check us out online at [www.TheGratitudeSpark.com](http://www.TheGratitudeSpark.com) on Instagram at @thegratitudespark or join our Facebook community called the "The Gratitude Spark".*

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IGNITED HOPE



By Suzanne Barbknecht

"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."  
-Mother Teresa

I recently shared some reflections from my time in Uganda with a friend. (To learn more about this trip see last month's Ignited Hope column.) As part of my response I stated this was my favorite trip thus far. She then asked, "What made this trip special?" Her question caused me to think deeply and helped draw out what God has been doing in my heart. I love great questions like that!

There are a few factors, but today I want to hi-lite one: the team -- the twelve people God called together to serve, love, press into challenges, grow, honor Jesus, work alongside, empower others, and to see more of God's Kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Going after a common vision and purpose with a group of others, side by side, is powerful.

We need one another. We each carry unique giftings given to us from the Lord that are intended to bring strength to the whole of the Body and impact the world.

I am so, so grateful for the privilege to have worked with this team and other teams and relationships God has provided in this journey of life.

Is there a team of people you've worked with who have deeply impacted your life?

Take a moment and thank God for these people and

these opportunities.

Take a moment to reach out to these people and express your gratitude for them and the impact knowing and working them has made in your life. Speak hope to them today.

If this is something your heart desires, I pray today for the cultivation of these kinds of relationships in your life and for God to orchestrate the intersecting of hearts and lives for great Kingdom purposed in and through you all!

*Suzanne Barbknecht - daughter of God, writer, photographer, worship leader, pastor, missionary to the Northland - originally from the fertile farm land of Waseca, now resides in the Northwoods of Bemidji and is passionate about living a lifestyle of hope while inspiring others in the same. Connect more at [www.ignited-hope.com](http://www.ignited-hope.com), [www.facebook.com/suzanne.barbknecht](http://www.facebook.com/suzanne.barbknecht), or [sbarbknecht@gmail.com](mailto:sbarbknecht@gmail.com).*



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## Elvira Young, Royal Villa Resident

By Gary Korogi



Royal Villa resident Elvira Young was kind enough to share some memories of growing up around the farming and small-town communities in Southern Minnesota. She was born on her parent's farm in Manchester Township in 1923. Like many farm families, she had several siblings, and everyone had daily chores. Her family had cows which meant they would be milking them twice a day every day and when the milking was complete, her Dad would make the trip to the creamery to deliver the milk for processing. One morning her Dad came home with a young man. Her Dad learned the young man had lost his family and had no place to go, so her Dad brought him home and he was welcomed into the family as a new brother. She recalled the day her Dad brought all the kids to town to get new boots before dropping them off at school. The day started out with heavy rains and the temperatures began dropping. School was let out early as the rain had turned to snow, and they rode the bus to a neigh-

bor's place. From there they walked home following the fence line to their driveway before sheltering in the house. Unknown at the time but that storm turned out to be the Armistice Day blizzard which was one of the worst storms to hit the Upper Midwest. As Elvira studied, she quickly found she had a knack for math and this skill was put to work helping her Dad complete the assessor duties for the local farms he was responsible for assessing. When she graduated, she was able to get a "man's job" at the Implement and Hardware dealer in Freeborn, as the men were fighting in World War II. She met her future husband Elmer at the Implement shop, and he served our Country as a machine gunner in Italy. Elmer suffered a severe injury while serving in Italy and after his hospitalization he continued to serve and eventually made his way back home to the Freeborn area. A year later, (1947), they were married. The two began farming Elmer's parents farm near Freeborn where they started raising a family of five. They raised cattle and eventually changed the operation over to hogs. When the kids got home from school, she had



homemade tomato soup and fresh bread for them and then they were off to do the afternoon chores before washing up for a home cooked supper. She enjoyed baking and admits the kids were a little spoiled with the many home-made rolls she baked. The kids quickly grew and before you knew it, they were going out into the world to start their lives. Elvira and Elmer continued to farm until his war injuries forced him into retiring from farming. They bought a house in Freeborn and Elvira began caring for her parents who were disabled in a car accident. They decided to move into the Royal Villa in 2014. Elmer was nervous about the move into The Royal Villa, but he enjoyed the apartment.



Elvira Young

We enjoy having Elvira at the Royal Villa and wish her a Happy 97th Birthday this April!

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## Celebrating 25 Years of National Service



By Tim Penny



program would become to our culture of volunteerism and giving back to our communities. Even more surprising, and delightful, to me is the fact that I am now president of an organization that has stewarded AmeriCorps programs for the full 25 years. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) we are celebrating a quarter of a century of serving our 20-county region through AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps is made up of three primary programs that each take a different approach to improving lives and fostering civic engagement. Members commit their time to addressing critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks and preparing for disasters. There are currently 75,000 members serving at 21,000 locations nation-wide.

Additionally, AmeriCorps is

proud to boast more than 1 million alumni. At SMIF, more than 600 members have served in our region over the years.

In the beginning, SMIF partnered with Winona State and MSU-Mankato to manage the Southern Minnesota AmeriCorps program which re-

sponded to various needs including early childhood, tutoring and general nonprofit support. In 2005, SMIF narrowed its focus and created the AmeriCorps LEAP (Learning Early Achieves Potential) Initiative.

(continued on page 17)

One of my proudest moments as a congressman was voting to support the creation of the national AmeriCorps program 25 years ago. Little did I know at the time how central this



This month I want to discuss the impact of fear upon our health. Whether in print, on screen or day to day conversation, you cannot escape the word "CORONAVIRUS". While all viral experiences need to be given due respect, for the majority of people, they are nothing that need to be feared.

According to an article in the University of Minnesota's "Taking Care of Your Health & Wellbeing" online publication, "fear weakens our immune system and can cause cardiovascular damage, gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome, and decreased fertility. It can lead to accelerated ageing and even premature death."

The immune system is a pretty cool thing. Without it, our bodies would be susceptible to attack from bacteria, viruses, parasites and more! When an enemy is spotted, a sophisticated attack is on the charge. The immune system is spread throughout the body and involves many types of cells, organs, proteins, and tissues. It can distinguish our tissue from foreign tissue — self from non-self. Dead and faulty cells are also recognized and cleared away by the immune system.

If the immune system en-

counters a pathogen, the coronavirus for instance, it mounts a so-called immune response. The white blood cells are the soldiers and are circulated in the body via the blood vessels and the lymphatic vessels which run paralleled to the arteries and veins. When the white blood cells find a target, they begin to multiply and send signals out to other cell types to do the same.

There are several different types of white blood cells, each with different jobs to do. Some of the cells surround and absorb pathogens and break them down, effectively eating them. There are others that remember previous invaders and recognize them if they come back to attack again.

When we're stressed, the immune system's ability to fight off antigens is reduced. That is why we are more susceptible to bacterial and viral invaders. The stress hormone corticosteroid can lower the number of white blood cells available to protect and defend against the invading pathogens.

So, how can we avoid being, "scared to death" about the coronavirus? As always, true wellness is about being proactive. Wash your hands. Get good rest. Cleanse your lymphatic system with a full body massage. Use acupuncture to increase your chi which increases your immunity. Have a chiropractic adjustment allowing all of the nervous systems communication to work efficiently. Eat real food, especially greens. Flush your body by drinking water. Get outside to breathe and move your body. Meditation and prayer. Most importantly, STOP BEING AFRAID... all IS well!

**Green Grass and Flowers**

March

There is an old Russian Proverb that says:  
"A kind word is like a spring day".

Kind words are essential in our daily lives,  
But the essence of spring also warms our soul.

My experience with the month of March is not the best.  
It teases me with warmer weather

And then dampens that joy with heavy wet snow.  
Yet, the excitement to see the first blade of green grass,  
Watch a purple crocus push through the snow,  
Or spy my very first Robin –

Maybe, just maybe, spring will arrive!  
Now April – that is a whole different story.

Those April showers bring May flowers. Beautiful!  
No more snowflakes and blizzards. Yeah!

There are Easter Lilies and eggs to color for the baskets.  
There are hopping bunnies to do the deliveries.

There are Hot Cross Buns to eat.  
And there is a Resurrection to celebrate.

What an absolutely great month.  
Enjoy each month –

Remembering, "A kind word is like a spring day".  
We all need kind words

And we are surely ready for the joys of spring.  
Hello spring and goodbye winter, right?

(All pictures are from the free clip art website on Goggle.)

Hello  
Spring  
Goodbye  
Winter

Marlys Garness is a retired resident of Waseca. She is a former Elementary Music teacher and Activity Director for Long Term Care Facilities. She enjoys writing about her memories, every day experiences in her life, and her own thoughts about living a worthwhile life in an ever changing and challenging world. Her writings are her legacy to her grandchildren. If you would like to see more of Marlys' writings, you may go online to [www.fouryellowroses.com](http://www.fouryellowroses.com). You may also contact her at [marlysgarness@gmail.com](mailto:marlysgarness@gmail.com).



# Celebrating 25 Years of National Service

(continued from page 16)

We place up to 20 members in early childhood settings across our region each year. Members work one-on-one

*Sudoku Answers*

2	1	7	3	9	6	4	5	8
9	6	4	7	8	5	3	1	2
3	8	5	2	1	4	7	9	6
7	4	8	6	2	1	9	3	5
5	3	1	9	7	8	2	6	4
6	2	9	4	5	3	8	7	1
8	7	6	1	3	2	5	4	9
1	5	3	8	4	9	6	2	7
4	9	2	5	6	7	1	8	3

and in small groups with young children, ages three to five, who are at risk of falling behind. They work on building social and emotional proficiencies to prepare for kindergarten success. The LEAP program has served more than 5,000 children since inception.

Over the years, SMIF has also been the host for the AmeriCorps VISTA program which focuses on building capacity for nonprofits with a focus on entrepreneurship and workforce development. Our members specifically work to expand the reach of resources for minority entrepreneurs. We currently have one member, Sam Temple, serving at the Faribault Diversity Coalition to help them engage with more minority business owners in the community. Another VISTA member, Katie Yoder, serves with the Lake City Economic Development Authority to help reach out to the Spanish-speaking

population.

One of the things that I love about AmeriCorps is that it embraces members from all walks of life. Many of our members are southern Minnesotans who want to serve in their own backyard, while others are from different states and came here to experience something new. One of our current members, Adriana Bermudez, is excited to be serving at the very same Head Start preschool that she attended as a child in Northfield. Some of our members are recent college graduates who are looking to get experience before starting a career path. Others, like Peggy Rankin from Trimont, are retired professionals looking to give back to their communities. Peggy, who serves at a school in Sherburn, is in her third year serving through our program and already planning on a fourth. Members who com-

plete their service term receive an award which can be used for paying off student loans or furthering their education. Those members who are 55 or older can gift their award to a child or grandchild.

It has been incredible to see the impact that AmeriCorps has had in our country over the past 25 years. Even more so, it has been wonderful to see the direct result that this program has had on the children and nonprofits in our own backyard.

We are currently accepting full- and half-time applications for the 2020-2021 school year for AmeriCorps LEAP and AmeriCorps VISTA. Contact Barbara Gunderson, AmeriCorps Director, at 507-456-0353 or barabarag@smifoundation.org to learn more.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at timp@smifoundation.org or 507-455-3215.



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	1	7	3	9		4	5	
9		4	7					2
			2	1	4		9	
7		8						5
		1						
				5		8		1
			3	2			4	
	5		8	4			2	7
	9		5		7			



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## Spend Time Outdoors



By Jim Miller

Your brains need a break. You spend most of your day filtering, processing and responding to stimulation. This constant demand on your mental reserves needs to be relieved. Nature provides the space for your brain to restore. It is in our genetic programming for nature to activate the part of our brain responsible for empathy and love, so nature makes you a nicer person.

Studies have shown that spending time outdoors will:

- 1 Increase feelings of contentment.
- 2 Reduce depression.
- 3. Reduce feelings of anger.
- 4 Slow down anxiety.

Focusing on what is around you allows your brain to see what is, instead of the "what ifs" that often make anxiety and depression worse.



The University of Minnesota reports that time spent outside impacts your endocrine, immune and nervous system.

When you are spending time in nature (or even just looking at nature scenes) your blood pressure lowers and the tension in your muscles is released.

Other benefits include:

1 Healthier sleep: Better sleep is central to good brain health. Stepping out of your door (or even sitting by a window) can help to regulate your circadian rhythms and improve your ability to fall and stay asleep. This is most likely caused by exposure to sunlight.

2. Improved eyesight: Natural settings also are beneficial for your eyesight. Spending time indoors and looking at screens limits the exercise your eyes get. Your eye muscles will be both relaxed and strengthened when you are able to focus on objects far away. Outside you might look across a landscape, look up to clouds or stretch to the top of a tree. You naturally alternate between looking at objects close by and far away.

3. Less pain: A study conducted by Robert Ulrich looked at patients in the hospital who had gallbladder surgery. The patients who recovered in a room with a window looking out at trees reported less pain and were out of the hospital quicker. There is a logic behind the tradition of bringing flowers and plants to those in the hospital!

Next time you feel a headache coming on, are feeling run down or a parent or senior loved one is complaining of achy joints, try a dose of green nature therapy.

Getting outdoors is a neces-

sary and proven way to improve your overall health, but we need to make time for nature in our everyday lives and schedules.

The first thing to do is to be aware of how important it is to interact with nature. Even if it is just for five minutes at a time. Look at your daily, weekly and monthly schedule and plan for how you can incorporate little bits of the outdoors into your life.

If you are physically able, make a plan to go out each day (or week). Go for a walk in a local park. Find an empty soccer field and just walk slowly around the field looking at the green contrasting with the buildings and sky. Or, ride your bike around a green space.

If it is difficult to get outdoors, you can bring nature's benefits indoors. Indoor plants have been shown to reduce anxiety and stress. Whenever you can, try to also sit by a window looking out to nature.

Animals in nature and pets are also important parts of how the outdoors strengthens your brain and reduces stress. Spend time stroking a pet, or set up a bird feeder and watch the birds fly.

Even looking at paintings and photographs of nature scenes can be beneficial.

Constant stress will harm your brain health, but you can take advantage of nature's answer to stress.

Spend some time breathing in the breeze, marveling the flow of water or watching the clouds. See if a bit of that mental load is released and your brain feels healthier and stronger.



### March Resident Profile

#### Say Hello to Winnie Swenson

This month of March 2020 brings us to introduce another of our residents, Winnie Swenson.

She was born Winifred Stendel and grew up just outside of Meriden, MN. She went to District 48 Country School with her brother and then high school in Owatonna. As a teen, her family moved to Ellendale, where she helped out in their restaurant. There she met a young man just out of the service, named Clayton Halverson, whom she married a year later.

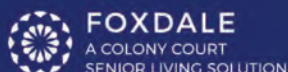
Winnie and Clayton moved to Owatonna where they raised 2 of their kids. Winnie worked at American Yearbook Co. (Jostens) and then Federated Mutual Insurance. They eventually moved to her grandparent's home in Mariden, had another child, and purchased Torbert's Locker in Waseca, renaming it Halverson's. Years later they moved again, to Otisco, and moved their business with them. After her husband died, she took a job at Brown Printing and worked there for 22 years. She met her second husband, Marvin Swenson, during that time and moved, once again, to Waseca.

About a year and a half ago she moved for the last time, to Colony Court. Marvin had passed away and the girls didn't think she should be living at home, alone. "I didn't know if I'd know anybody here, but it's like family now and it's wonderful! As long as I can live here, I'll never have to wear another winter coat!"

**We think of you as family too, Winnie, and we're so glad you moved in!**



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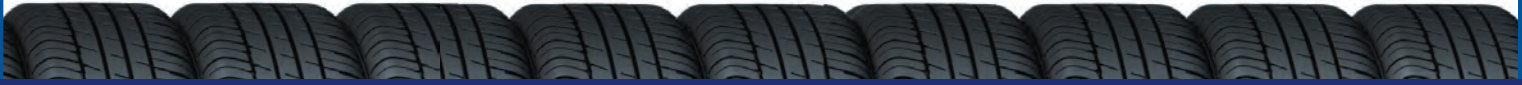
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