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MONEY SMARTS



11, are fans of a free webinar called "Mindful Holiday Spending," which Summit offers this year on Nov. 10 and Dec. 8. It gives useful information you can use immediately to appropriately distribute your generosity to others this season.

They also recommended Summit's "Holiday Budget Worksheet" as a first step to estimate holiday costs that can sneak up on you — food and entertainment, decorations and donations. There are webinars, worksheets and other ways to make your plans available at SummitCreditUnion.com/MoneySmarts.

Create a new gift-giving tradition

Sue and Jeff also overhauled their gift-giving tradition to save for needed purchases in coming years.

They asked family members to list four types of presents in a fun exercise: something you want, need, wear and read.

The couple also suggested considering lower cost experience gifts, such as homemade goodies and state park passes.

They said these new habits made everyone on their gift-giving list really think about the meaning of the holiday. Their family chose to keep gifts to a minimum so they could focus on what they cherished: spending time together.

MONEY SMARTS

BY KIM SPONEM



Through Summit's annual Project Money challenge, participants work with a Summit financial coach to lower debt, increase savings, strengthen their financial well-being and compete for a \$10,000 prize while sharing their experience on TV and online so thousands can learn and take action.

How do we enjoy the holiday season without running up debt that makes the first few months of 2022 a struggle?

Many of us have a lot to celebrate this holiday season as we share time in person with our friends and families.

While it's natural to want to splurge after a year of holding back, most of us want to reduce stress and avoid credit card debt.

Let's ask some of our Project Money participants for their tips on keeping your spending under control this season. They have great wisdom on this topic because participants learn how to build sustainable financial habits that reduce stress around money.

Make a quick plan

Many Project Money participants limit spending by only using budgeted funds from designated savings accounts like "holiday spending," for example.

While it may be too late to open a savings account for holiday spending this year, it's not too early to start one for next year. Past and present participants have other advice that can help you create a plan for this holiday season.

Sue and Jeff, Project Money winners of Season

Enjoy finding alternative gifts

Katie, a Season 13 Project Money participant and single mother of four, said in her blog that the holidays are "hands down the most stressful time of the year for me." This holiday she and her family have chosen to celebrate with many inexpensive traditions, such as new jammies, cookie baking and watching holiday movies together. Rather than buying presents the children may only enjoy for a short time after opening them, Katie gave each child the opportunity to choose a charity for a donation.

In this busy season, finding time to celebrate each other can be the greater gift and one that helps your family avoid difficult financial surprises in the new year.

And as you consider New Year's resolutions, keep in mind you can make next year's holiday spending even easier by starting a separate savings account today! Summit Credit Union's financial coaches work with members on financial wellness all year and are ready to help anytime.

Kim Sponem is CEO & President since 2002, of Summit Credit Union, a \$4.8 billion, member-owned financial cooperative with more than 220,000 members and is federally insured by the NCUA. Kim has a passion for empowering people to improve their financial well-being for a richer life.

Ask Kim your money questions at MoneySmarts@SummitCreditUnion.com.



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TRADITIONS AND THANKFULNESS

As we ease into the holiday season, I'm reminded of two things, especially this year: celebrating holiday traditions and being grateful.

When I was younger, we faithfully counted down the days until Christmas, starting on Dec. 1, with a felt wall hanging, handmade by my mom. Each day, my brothers and I would take a turn hanging up one ornament that completed a holiday gingerbread scene. Santa, of course, went up on Dec. 24.

Recently my mom brought the wall hanging over to our house so my kids can enjoy it now. They carefully and eagerly unrolled the wall hanging and started putting each of the ornaments in their spot for a sneak preview (in October). It made me so happy to have something in our home, handmade by my mom, that we enjoyed for so many years during the holidays. Now my kids can love it, too.

Months back, the idea of holiday traditions and recipes circulated amongst our editorial staff, and it turned into a feature about favorite dishes food industry pros like to make during the holidays — and most importantly, how we can replicate their tasty dishes at home for our own families. And, we wanted to know the traditions and stories behind these recipes too — and they shared those with us. Read all about it and get ready to make your next favorite dish, starting on P. 30.

We wanted to have an uplifting feature in this issue, because let's face it, it hasn't been easy during the pandemic. Many of us have to take it day by day, juggling still-hurting

finances, childcare concerns and worries about sick family members. Although it doesn't fix everything, I've tried to adopt the mantra of replacing "I have to" with, "I get to." What does that mean? It means adopting a gratefulness mindset — replacing thoughts like, "I have to do the laundry" with "I get to do the laundry" because we have the resources to purchase the clothing my family needs. In our "Living With Tenacity" feature on P. 43, we meet three area families who have differently-abled kids, who talk about how they've been able to adjust and adapt to helping their kids thrive. These kids and families epitomize the mindset of not being limited by a disability, and instead embracing what they *can* do. I'm grateful for the many organizations and nonprofits that are serving these families with the resources they need.

In this issue we also showcase the best of our city, so read about fantastic local gift ideas (P. 53), Ali Muldrow's awesome work with area youth (P. 14) and delicious holiday treats (P. 69).

We hope you've enjoyed the content you've read this year in BRAVA, and we're looking forward to our 20th anniversary next year! We'll kick off 2022 with our Women to Watch feature in our January/February 2022 issue that you won't want to miss.

Shayna Mace
Editorial Director
@shaynamace



SAVE THE DATE!

Our Women to Watch event is back (hooray!). Help us by celebrating our 10th annual class

of amazing women on Jan. 25 from 5:30-8 p.m. Our 2022 group is just as inspiring as ever, with women in the fields of nonprofit work, the arts and business. Check back at bravamagazine.com/w2w for more details on the event in the coming weeks.



GLORIOUS GIFTS

I can't get over how cute this quirky cat vase is from The Regal Find! I had to buy it, and it's already sitting on my dining room table with a flower

in it. Shop local by checking out tons of other fabulous gift ideas in our "Gift-Tastic Finds" feature. P. 53



INSPIRING INTERIOR

We've featured work by interior designer Stephanie Mader in our sister publication Lakeshore Living, and we worked with her yet again to curate a stylish mood board in Dwell. She

incorporated an on-trend art deco aesthetic, plus vibrant color and statement lighting to inspire your home décor. P. 25

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WONDERFUL WISCONSIN

BY SHAYNA MACE

Imagine taking the best of Wisconsin and packaging it up in a beautiful box and sending it to friends near and far, so they can experience Dairy State goodness. That's exactly the concept behind WiscoBoxes, founded by Sarah Botham in 2016. The curated, themed boxes are packed with locally-produced products from Forestville to Fond du Lac, and everywhere in between. Botham estimates they work with over 200 vendors from 66 communities. One of those vendors includes her and husband Peter's winery, Botham Vineyards, located in Barneveld.

Botham says she started thinking about her business idea after reflecting on the "art, science and passion that Peter puts into winemaking, and understanding ... there are others doing really extraordinary things in Wisconsin," the lifelong Wisconsin resident explains. "My passion for Wisconsin is in the high-quality artisans and iconic makers who are here and can be celebrated – and that's really what started it. They're the ones who work so hard to bring Wisconsin to life." 🌸

SHOP THE LOOK



The charming Rise 'N Shine box has traditional breakfast favorites, such as Willow Creek pancake mix, Tapped maple syrup and a Holly Neuman Ceramics handcrafted mug – perfect for your cup of Colectivo Coffee. \$91



A favorite of Botham's, the Elegance box is the perfect gift to pamper someone with. The giftee can light a Soja Bougie candle, pour Janet Marie's Felted Goods bath salts in the tub and even savor a Madison Chocolate Company treat. \$105



"The Grateful box is special for this time of year ... [as] this time of year is a big one for gratitude," says Botham. "It is a really wonderful box." With Potter's Crackers rye crackers, Hook's one-year cheddar and Wildwood Specialty Foods goodies, the recipient will surely be grateful. From \$92



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SCULPTING A BETTER FUTURE, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

Madison school board president and GSAFE co-executive director Ali Muldrow understands that the key to a better, more just society is with our youth.

BY SHELBY ROWE MOYER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHALICIA JOHNSON

Ali Muldrow will never forget a student she met years ago when she was a guest speaker at a high school English class, discussing spoken word poetry.

Students were asked to examine a poem and use it as inspiration for writing their own version. One student's poem was entitled, "How to Be a Low-Income Girl, for Those of You Who Aren't"

"It's just so vulnerable," Muldrow says. "She writes about what it was like for her as a kid to give away her own toys at birthday parties, because she didn't want to show up empty-handed."

Awash with emotion, Muldrow told the girl how talented she was and that she could be a writer. It was the first time someone had ever told her that. Muldrow never saw her again, but a few years later, she got a Facebook message from that young woman that read: "I just wanted you to know that I am a writer."

Lives can be transformed by these small exchanges of respect, encouragement and empowerment. Muldrow had many of her own when she was in school, some positive, some negative — all of which has shaped her work with Madison's youth.

After working in various aspects of education for several years, Muldrow joined GSAFE (Gay Straight Alliance for Schools) in 2014 and has been serving as co-executive director for the last four years. The statewide organization provides youth programming; outlets for activism and advocacy; and educator training on topics like how to support transgender and gender non-conforming youth, preventing bullying and creating a Gay-Straight Alliance club.

One of GSAFE's overarching goals is to create spaces where students feel safe and valued, particularly at school. But Muldrow also wanted the ability to influence school policy and help close opportunity gaps for students of color.

So, in 2019, Muldrow ran for and won a seat on the Madison Metropolitan School Board and is the current



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Jared Esguerra, *Tenor*

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THRIVE | PERSPECTIVE

president Muldrow's term expires in the spring, but she plans to run again. Overall, her goals are to expand creative opportunities for early childhood students; address student inequalities at the policy level; and inspire the community at large to unite and invest in the local schools. This desire to make Madison a better place stems from her own student experience.

When Muldrow graduated from Madison East High School in 2005, she said most of her Black peers didn't receive their diplomas — in fact, less than 50% of Black students graduated. Recently, the four-year graduation rate for Black MMSD students was about 65%, so there's still a lot more work to be done, she says.

In order to maintain a direct connection to students, Muldrow also teaches GSAFE's Foundations for Leadership class, facilitated in partnership with MMSD and UW-Madison. High

school students are nominated for the class, and they spend evenings studying activism. Muldrow's students have gone on to organize gun violence and pipeline protests across the U.S. And Bleed Shamelessly — a Madison nonprofit that centers around menstruation equity — was founded by a former Foundations for Leadership's student.

Muldrow sees the impact that empowerment has on local youth, especially if they're given platforms to exercise their voices. But for community members that don't have kids, investing in the schools can be a difficult buy-in. So, she asks people what they do care about.

"No matter what you care about, school is a place where all of that comes together," Muldrow says. "The opportunities that [kids] have today will shape the future. Education is our key to tomorrow." 🌸

Want to know more about Ali? Visit bravamagazine.com for her full story.



FAMILY

Health Series



Our family has never been one to participate in elaborate holiday traditions, but we sure love to gather together and share a day of delicious snacks and meals. With the holiday season quickly approaching, it's a great time to start thinking about how to balance the fun with staying healthy! It takes a little more effort, but it is possible to make smart, healthy decisions while enjoying yourself. How can you indulge without overdoing it? I'm here to share my favorite tips and tricks.

Cook at home.

Preparing your dishes at home rather than purchasing them gives you the chance to control what ingredients you're eating. It also provides an opportunity to cook alongside your kids to create cherished holiday memories!

Substitute ingredients.

Try whole wheat grains instead of white, bananas in baked

Be Mindful of Nutrition While Enjoying the Holidays

Dr. Wendy Jin, pediatrician for UnityPoint Health-Meriter Hospital, offers suggestions on eating well during this indulgent season.

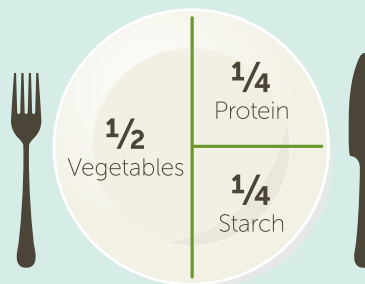
recipes instead of butter, canned black beans instead of flour, Stevia instead of sugar, mashed cauliflower instead of potatoes and Greek yogurt instead of sour cream.

Offer healthy options.

Pair some fruits or vegetables with homemade dip and offer those throughout the day. If you're sitting down for a multi-course meal, kick it off with some greens!

Balance your plate.

Pause when serving and mindfully shoot for a plate that is half vegetables and fruits, a quarter protein and a quarter of grains.



Stay active.

Plan some family activities that involve getting up and moving around. Have a dance party, go for a hike or explore a park.

Portion control.

Eat because you're hungry, not because the food looks delicious or just happens to be there! Before going up for seconds, give yourself 15-30 minutes and then decide if you're truly still hungry. It can take a few minutes before your brain receives those fullness signals, so by waiting a short while, you often don't feel hungry anymore.

Set an example for your kids!

As always, your children will be so much more willing to do what you do rather than what you tell them to do.

Happy holidays everyone!

— Dr. Wendy Jin, MD, MPH, FAAP
is a pediatrician at
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BANISHING THE BLOAT

If you're struggling with the uncomfortable feeling of bloat, identifying why it's happening can help you reduce its effect.

BY EMMY BAWDEN

Bloating is that bothersome sensation of your gut stretching from fluid or gas. It's one of the most common gastrointestinal symptoms, and while the causes of bloating are quite complex and can be a sign of a medical condition, occasional bloating is normal and may actually indicate good bacteria growth. But this doesn't make it any less uncomfortable! Here are the top causes of bloating and how to alleviate them.

CULPRIT #1: YOUR CYCLE

Have you noticed how bloating worsens leading up to and/or during your period? This is related to a shift in estrogen and progesterone that causes water retention and uterine lining thickening, but that's not all! Research suggests sex hormone receptors line the digestive tract, so changes to hormone levels may affect how sensitive the gut is, how well gut muscles contract to move contents through and your body's response to stress (see Culprit #2), all of which may increase bloating.

Try this: Limit alcohol, coffee and bubbly drinks for a few days, and shoot for some light movement, like gentle yoga or walking, to keep things moving in your gut (including built-up gas).

CULPRIT #2: STRESS

The way we deal with stress has a huge impact on our gut thanks to the gut-brain axis, which is the two-way communication line between these systems. When our brain detects external stress, the sympathetic nervous system (the "fight or flight" system) is stimulated, which causes energy to be directed away from the gut. This changes how our gut functions via the enteric nervous system that lines our digestive organs, and as a result, its contents may move through your system more slowly (or for some people, it may speed things up). In addition, your gut may

become hypersensitive, and these two changes may therefore trigger symptoms such as bloating.

Try this: Take five minutes of deep belly breaths (i.e. diaphragmatic breathing) every day for at least eight weeks.

CULPRIT #3: TOO MUCH FIBER

There is such a thing as too much fiber! Because it's not digestible, excessive fiber (or increasing fiber in your diet too quickly) can lead to excess gas production, and as a result, bloating. This is especially true of sources of fiber like beans, onions and apples, because our good gut bugs love to ferment these.

Try this: Cut back on fiber to 25-36 grams per day, spread it out across your day and try low fermentability, fiber-rich foods like oats, almonds, chia seeds, spinach and strawberries.

CULPRIT #4: THE WRONG SUPPLEMENTS

Many supplements are loaded with fermentable, bloat-inducing ingredients that, while they serve as excellent "food" for probiotics in your gut, can cause significant discomfort for some. Although not everyone is sensitive to these ingredients, they're commonly found in certain prebiotic or probiotic supplements, protein bars, and powders, fiber supplements and bars and zero-sugar products.

Try this: Look for and try reducing ingredients such as inulin, chicory root, sugar alcohols and fructooligosaccharides (FOS). If you're interested in a fiber supplement, check with your doctor first and consider a low-fermentability soluble fiber, such as plain psyllium husk. 🌸

Emmy Bawden, MS, RDN, CD and LDN is a registered dietitian nutritionist and owner of the Madison-based nutrition therapy practice *Real Good Nutrition*.



FOUR THINGS GREAT LEADERS DO

If you're looking to up your leadership skills, aim to improve these areas.

BY SHELBY ROWE MOYER

If you're in a managerial position, the question of "what makes a great leader?" has probably crossed your mind at some point. We can all think back to good (and bad) managers we've had and pinpoint qualities that made them delightful or difficult to work for.

But a great leader is, in short, someone people love to work for, says executive coach Kimberly Jarvis.

For the past 20 years, Jarvis has been working to help foster and develop the careers of MBA students and professionals, and she founded her own executive coaching and consulting firm, All Career Matters, in 2018.

Over the last several decades a lot of research has been conducted to learn what engages and motivates employees, which ultimately drives productivity, great customer service, increases profit and more.

Jarvis says a good leader makes all the difference, and there are several attributes and behaviors that are shared by the best managers and executives: empathy and respect, offering timely feedback, requesting feedback and outlining and communicating company goals. Some of these elements come naturally to some people, but they can also be learned, Jarvis says.

"I don't call these 'soft skills,'" Jarvis says, of these qualities and behaviors. "There's nothing 'soft' about them. I think they're just incredibly valuable. They're not technical skills to do a job, but that doesn't make them less important"

COMMUNICATION

Managers are the filter through which organizational changes and goals are disseminated. Jarvis says some things will, of course, remain confidential, but it's important that leaders be upfront and transparent with employees as much as possible — whether it's the state of the company or how each individual makes an impact.

"In the absence of information, people make up their own stories about what's happening, what it means for the company or whether or not they're going to succeed," Jarvis says.

The pandemic is a great example. Most, if not all, workplaces were affected in some way. Jarvis says good managers need to be able to understand and navigate complex situations, so they can lead their teams through inevitable ebbs and flows.

But communication needs to extend beyond project and company updates. It's also critical that leaders offer direct feedback that's positive and constructive.

"I think the bigger hurdle is when constructive feedback needs to be shared — when someone's behavior is getting in the way of their goals or their team's goals. People will often shy away from sharing that feedback for various reasons, and one common reason is that they feel like it's not very nice."

Though it might feel uncomfortable to provide constructive criticism, withholding it is even more detrimental, because the manager is effectively withholding an opportunity for that person to change and improve, according to Jarvis.

EMPATHY

Providing a culture and an environment where people feel psychologically safe, respected and that their managers care about them is imperative, Jarvis says. Empathy is a foundational tenet of all great leaders.

"[It's crucial to have] a boss that knows that we're human and that we have human, messy lives — lives outside of work, medical situations that will arise and childcare situations," she says.

Part of leadership is understanding that employees are people, and people make mistakes. Jarvis says it's helpful when employees know that they're allowed to make those mistakes, and that it's OK, as long as they learn from them.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Whether it's formally or informally, managers should be asking their employees for feedback — even a question as simple as: What can I do to better support you?

"If they ask that question regularly, and they hear the answer and they have a relationship of trust with the person, they'll



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eventually hear what they can do differently to better support the person,” Jarvis says. “They’ll hear things like: ‘Let me own my own work.’ Or: ‘Stop asking me to update you on every single detail; I feel like you don’t trust me.’ Or: ‘I need more help and direction than you’re giving me. I don’t know what the next step is.’”

If a manager is asking for feedback, but they consistently hear, “Keep doing what you’re doing,” then they need to push back, Jarvis says. Surely the employee can think of one thing that can be improved, Jarvis says.

And once you get this feedback, do something with it. Use that feedback to create professional goals, she says. How do you, as the manager, want to change the way you’re behaving or operating? Outline how you’d like to grow and develop, and pair that with actions you can implement in a timely fashion.

STAY FOCUSED

It’s easy to get distracted by the project or problem of the day. Effective leaders need to stay focused on the big picture. What projects



“[It’s crucial to have] a boss that knows that we’re human and that we have human, messy lives — lives outside of work, medical situations that will arise and childcare situations.”

— Kimberly Jarvis

or actions will help move the company forward? Disseminate those priorities to your team, explain its impact and ask them to help hold you accountable.

“Sometimes it’s easy to focus on activity versus results,” Jarvis says. “It’s easy to feel like you’re getting a lot done. But what are you actually accomplishing? What are the results of those activities?”

WANT MORE RESOURCES?

Jarvis says Robert I. Sutton’s “Good Boss, Bad Boss,” is so good she says she wants to clap while she’s reading it. The newest edition has a new chapter with insights on what Sutton has learned since writing the first iteration of the book. Sutton also breaks situations down into simple comparisons with charts that detail how a good boss might approach a situation versus a bad boss.

Jarvis also recommends Brené Brown’s “Dare to Lead.” This research-based, best-selling title explores and explains how to mold braver, more daring leaders and how to develop a workplace culture that inspires courage. 🌸



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ASK THE EXPERT



UNDERSTANDING HAIR TRANSPLANT SURGERY

ASK DR. SHAMILA RAWAL

For some, daily efforts to camouflage their hair loss can be extensive and time-consuming. Despite the use of powders, styling products and strategic hairstyles, the constant threat of scalp show can result in reduced self-esteem and social anxiety. Hair transplant surgery, in appropriate candidates, can provide a permanent solution to this daily battle. Women and men can count on natural-looking results when an experienced surgeon like Shamila Gupta Rawal, MD, at The Rawal Institute for Hair Restoration and Aesthetic Medicine, performs their hair transplant surgery.

Q How does hair transplant surgery for women work, and how does it differ from men?

A hair transplant procedure in both males and females involves harvesting healthy hair from a donor site, then surgically implanting those hairs where you have thinning hair or balding (scalp, eyebrows, eyelashes, beard). Good candidates for transplant will meet two important criteria. First, you need to have enough donor hair to adequately restore the current and projected area of thinning or balding. And second, the balding area must be able to grow hair. For example, your skin may not support a new transplant if you have scarring hair loss that affects blood vessels and skin quality, or if thinning has been longstanding. Sometimes, I will pre-condition the scalp with PRP (platelet-rich plasma) and microneedling, to optimize the environment for a future transplant.

When planning hair restoration for males, the goals are to restore visible density that approximates the density of the "safe zones" and to restore their hairlines or temples to

younger times. Because females suffer more diffuse thinning, the goal of transplant is not to restore density in all the thin areas, rather to focus restoration to those areas that are influential for styling and camouflage. Additionally, men and women can undergo a hybrid procedure with some transplant and some scalp micropigmentation, to enhance the illusion of greater density.

Q Are there different types of procedures and are they painful?

There are two main approaches to hair transplant surgery: follicular unit transplantation (FUT) and follicular unit extraction (FUE). FUT is sometimes called strip transplantation because your donor hair is harvested by removing a long, thin strip of skin from the back and sides of your scalp. After removing the strip of healthy hair, the skin is sutured back together. When you have FUE, your hair is harvested using small circular punches that remove individual follicular units one at a time. The hairs are then transplanted the same way as a FUT transplant. While FUT allows me to harvest a larger number of hairs at one time, FUE offers other advantages, such as quicker healing of the donor sites. Females lean preferentially toward the FUT (strip) procedure, to maximize the yield of the harvest and to maintain their longer hair.

While any surgical procedure will result in some pain, in my office I administer nerve block injections to keep you comfortable throughout all the steps of surgery. Using only this local anesthesia with a mild sedative, like Valium, allows my patients the freedom to use the bathroom or take stretch breaks during the procedure and to enjoy lunch midday, without being overly sleepy.

Q What is recovery like?

After surgery, my patients will go home with a bandage that is removed after 24 hours. They can shower, but not get their heads wet until they then see me on Day 2, at which time I examine the surgical sites and give them permission to start washing their hair. Although strenuous physical activity is restricted for two weeks, my patients generally return to work on post-operative Day 3. Swimming is prohibited for eight weeks, but getting a haircut is allowed after two weeks and coloring is allowed after six weeks. Hair growth takes three to six months to become visible and will continue to improve over the following 12 months.

If you are interested in learning more about hair transplant surgery or other hair restoration options offered at my practice, do schedule a consultation. I will be happy to help you find the best solution for your needs. My goal is to make you...refreshed.

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The Importance of Breastfeeding for Black Women

"I think it's pretty amazing to look at a person who's growing rapidly and think all the nutrients that they need comes from you," shares Ali Muldrow. Breastfeeding has "been an easy thing to love doing."

Less than two months old, Muldrow's daughter, Frida, is nursing on demand. She breastfed her two other children as well.

"I wish the whole framework that we thought about breastfeeding changed. And I think seeing breastfeeding as this divine right, to take care of your baby and seeing yourself and your body as something that you are in charge of — I think is something Black women are denied aggressively. This conversation about whether or not Black women are choosing to breastfeed is the wrong conversation. This is not a choice," says Muldrow.

For Muldrow, who is well-known in the Madison community as the co-executive director of GSAFE, an organization working to create just schools for LGBTQ+ youth, taking charge of your health is about reclaiming liberation.

"It's something we can do for ourselves and for future generations," says Muldrow. "In breastfeeding, you are taking something back for the next generation of people that we were robbed of. We're robbed of time with our kids, robbed of affection and our children are

denied the right to be children right from the beginning."

A 2018 study on social, cultural and historical influences on Black breastfeeding found that multiple factors were listed contributing to Black women not breastfeeding, including discouragement from family members and historical connotations tied to breastfeeding, citing slavery and "wet-nursing" as detractors. The report notes that because of this, "there are potential contributions of generational, cultural and historical factors."

“I think it's pretty amazing to look at a person who's growing rapidly and think all the nutrients that they need come from you.”

Muldrow explains, "The average slave gave birth multiple times during adolescence, and then was forced into forced labor about two weeks later. So, this idea that there's space for Black women to rest and heal and bond with their baby, that's been completely devalued throughout the history of our society. We actually have never recovered from that," she continues. "You have to have a conscious conversation about what does it look like to recover and reclaim. It means, yeah, breastfeeding, but it also means having the financial reality and the housing and the employment support and the space and the equipment to pump and the different things that you need to support you in breastfeeding."

While UnityPoint Health-Meriter offers many avenues of support, like breastfeeding classes and lactation consultants, there is more that we

need to do, which is why hearing experiences like Muldrow's are so valuable. Learning and change occurs through listening to the experiences of Black women and hearing from them what types of supportive programs would be the most beneficial to them.

One such avenue for providing valuable feedback is through the Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC), comprised of community members and employees, led by the Patient Experience Partners. Any community member is welcome to apply to join. Patients are welcome to share experiences with our Patient Representatives at (608) 417-6462.

UnityPoint Health-Meriter is also actively involved in the Saving Our Babies initiative. To learn more about the program, visit Saving Our Babies – Foundation for Black Women's Wellness at ffbww.org.

"Positioning Black women to have healthy pregnancies and to have healthy babies and to feel confident in caring for their kids — that's about reorienting our society to Black women as human beings," says Muldrow as she shifts Frida to her other breast, who has been feeding consistently and with gusto. "She believes in it," Muldrow laughs, "she feels completely entitled to growing."

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SLEEK RETREAT

A neutral palette, paired with pops of color and shine, sumptuous textures and a bit of playfulness, achieves an eye-pleasing look.

PRODUCT SELECTION BY STEPHANIE MADER
PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY SHANNA WOLF

SW 7029
Agreeable Gray



Top to bottom: U Quartz Calcutta San Francisco quartz counter and fireplace surround; Sherwin-Williams Agreeable Gray SW 7029 paint swatch; Ballard Designs palm print wallpaper; emerald velvet fabric swatch (from Williams Sonoma Cambria custom ottoman), \$895-\$2,295, williams-sonoma.com; Jonathan Adler gold detailed rocket decanter, \$148, saksfifthavenue.com; and white Belgian linen fabric (from RH Lugano modular sectional), \$4,695 and up, rh.com.

THE BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL

Shop the look with interior designer Stephanie Mader's art deco picks that she used throughout a client's home for wow-worthy effect.

IMAGES COURTESY STEPHANIE MADER



Top: Jagger dining chair in Downy Snow, \$799, and Dandelion chandelier, \$939, both from **Arhaus**; Cambria ottoman in emerald velvet with heritage gray wood base, \$895, **Williams Sonoma Home**. **Left:** Mosaic mirror backsplash (custom-made for client). **Bottom:** Isabella gold snakeskin embossed/white vessel sink, \$244, **build.com**; Kohler toilet paper holder and towel ring in brushed gold, \$200, **kohler.com**; clear organic pendant light, \$399, **Arhaus**; Ballard Designs palm wallpaper; brass file cabinet, \$699, **CB2**; and gold/off-white cowhide rug, \$199, **luxurycowhides.com**. ✨



“ [My client's] house was built in 2008 and is a traditional Craftsman style. Our plan was to embrace the original Craftsman style while pairing it with a hip, modern, art deco vibe. The two [styles] are a perfect marriage, with their simple, clean lines. The client was looking for something bold and unique with lots of personality. ”

— Interior designer
Stephanie Mader



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SET THE SCENE

Party-planning tips, straight from an expert.

BY SHAYNA MACE

Throwing a small friend or family gathering this year? There are easy ways to pull it all together. We talked to Renee Tantillo — team and design manager at Elevate Events, an event planning and design firm — for her best tips.

COLOR CUES

Utilizing color is key to creating a mood for a party or a tablespace. Tantillo likes to start with a neutral palette and then pepper in color as an accent. In general, she says warm colors and nature-inspired elements, such as stoneware and natural fabrics, are trending right now.

"[At the holidays] I try to stay away from cliché color palettes. For example, using orange and mustard at Thanksgiving. Christmas is always very green, so I like

to start with a good base of neutral tones and infuse a pop or color or two ... from there," Tantillo explains.

For a recent event shoot she styled, Tantillo built the look around neutral-colored stoneware dishes and added warmth with a monochromatic palette of rose, berry and deep aubergine.

USE NATURAL ELEMENTS

Forget about always buying brand-new table decor — you can source natural items from outside. That's what Tantillo did here — the foliage in the centerpiece was sourced from her backyard.

"We didn't use any florals, which I think is unique in itself. We stuck with deeper-colored leaves that were literally cut off of a tree in my backyard. So, you could utilize whatever is growing around you for a tablespace."

TANTALIZING TABLESCAPES

Tantillo loves finding thrifted glassware (shown in the photos) for her smaller



events, and she'll mix in different glasses for a mismatched, unique look. She also shops at World Market for affordable plates, bowls and flatware. And she likes Crate & Barrel and Pottery Barn for specialty items, like candlesticks and vases.

"Those upscale specialty items mixed with thrifted pieces can work really well together — without going crazy on your budget," says Tantillo. ✨

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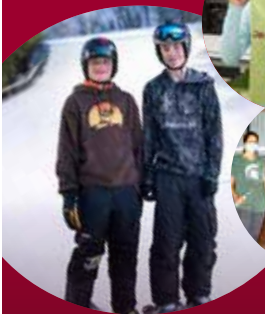


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HOUSE OF COLOUR
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Taste of the

Five local food and beverage industry professionals share their special holiday recipes.

BY CANDICE WAGENER

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FOOD STYLING BY SUNNY FRANTZ



Holidays

Jennifer Schwarzkopf, executive chef at Lucille, grew up in Mississippi with an American father and a Chilean mother. On a mission to master the Southern specialties that Schwarzkopf's father enjoyed, her mother pored over cookbooks from cover to cover. "She makes the best fried pork chops, creamed potatoes, and chicken and dumplings," says Schwarzkopf.

Seeing her mother's drive in the kitchen helped fuel Schwarzkopf's own passion for cooking. When she was old enough to help with Thanksgiving preparations, she was put in charge of the sweet potatoes. "The recipe was pretty simple, and very southern in nature: boiled sweet potatoes, whipped with salted butter, some Coca-Cola and lots of brown sugar to taste," says Schwarzkopf.

But her favorite step was always the final one: making a special design on top with mini marshmallows. "Of course, the oven always melted the marshmallows into an unrecognizable mess, but I would always explain what it did look like," says Schwarzkopf.

Her family eventually moved out to Las Vegas, where they celebrated Thanksgiving

one year with her dad's cousin and family. His cousin's wife, Angela, brought the sweet potatoes that year. "I was skeptical and a bit perturbed that my lifelong job was given away! However, I not only fell in love with Angela, but also her phenomenal sweet potatoes."

While she's made a few tweaks of her own over the years, Angela's recipe is "out of this world," says Schwarzkopf. "My allegiance changed instantly! Her dish (shown at left), unlike the one of my childhood, has various textures, a depth in flavor other than just sweet and is truly everything you could want in a Thanksgiving side."



Sweet Potato Casserole

Yield: Feeds 5-6 people

Casserole

- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes
- $\frac{1}{8}$ cup freshly-squeezed orange juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Topping

- 1 cup chopped pecans (optional)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Instructions

Combine all ingredients with a mixer and put into a casserole dish. Mix the topping ingredients — they will be crumbly — and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes.

Sometimes the topping doesn't come out so "crumbly," but spooning droplets of it on top does turn out well.



Turkey Pot Pie

During her childhood, Thanksgiving was a favorite holiday for Shaina Robbins Papach, co-owner of The Harvey House. She remembers it as “quite a bash” due to the large size of her mom’s family; each year they hosted upwards of 60 people at her family’s home in Madison.

“I loved having our family and friends over to celebrate food and love, but the thing I loved most was the next day,” says Robbins Papach. “Just my mom, dad and brother eating leftovers and chatting about the details of the night before.”

For many years, those leftovers consisted of turkey sandwiches with the “most perfect horseradish mayo,” says Robbins Papach. “As I became more enamored with cooking, leftovers turned into a turkey pot pie.”

When Robbins Papach and husband Joe, who is chef and co-owner of The Harvey House, started their family, he took over pot pie duty (shown at left) and made some minor tweaks “that makes it even more special,” says Robbins Papach. “Now when I eat turkey pot pie with my parents, [my] brother and his family and Joe and my kids, it makes me think of standing up eating [at] the kitchen counter with my parents and brother. It makes me feel comforted and comfortable, and makes me feel like I am at home.”



Turkey Pot Pie

Yield: 1 large pot pie or 6 individual pot pies (feeds six)

Ingredients

- 3 lb. organic turkey breast
- 2 qt. organic chicken stock
- 6 sprigs thyme
- ½ tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 whole garlic cloves (unpeeled and smashed)
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. organic butter
- 1 cup vidalia onion, diced
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ⅓ tsp. cracked black pepper
- 1 cup celery root, peeled and diced
- 1 cup carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 cup rutabaga, peeled and diced

- 1 Tbsp. all purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. fresh sage, stems removed and chopped
- 2 sheets frozen puff pastry

Instructions

Place the turkey breast, chicken stock, thyme, peppercorns, garlic and salt in a medium pot. Slowly bring to a simmer. Cook for 35 minutes or until the turkey breast registers an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove from the liquid and allow to cool. Strain the turkey broth and reserve 3 cups to use later.

Melt the butter in a large sauté pan on medium/low heat, add the onions and kosher salt. Sweat until tender without color. Add the cracked black pepper, celery, carrot and rutabaga, and continue to cook

until completely tender, about 10 minutes.

Once all of the vegetables are cooked, add the flour. Allow the flour to cook, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes. Add the turkey broth, turn heat to medium/high, and whisk. The liquid will begin to thicken, so be sure to whisk periodically to prevent sticking. Once the liquid has thickened, fold in the chopped fresh sage.

Transfer the pot pie filling to a large casserole dish or six individual, oven-safe dishes. Top with one sheet of puff pastry (or cut pastry into six squares with a cutter). Using a knife or decorative cutter, cut the second sheet of puff pastry into an autumnal shape of your desire (this step is optional). Bake in a preheated 375 degree oven for 30–45 minutes, until the pastry is golden brown.



Dolmathes in Avgolemono Sauce

“You’ll find dolmathes in avgolemono sauce at every one of our family functions,” says Erin Vranas, co-owner of Parthenon Gyros. A traditional Greek appetizer of stuffed grape leaves served with a lemony sauce, this particular recipe has been passed down for generations in the Vranas family.

“I first learned this recipe from my husband’s Yiayia [grandmother], who didn’t speak a lick of English and whose traditional Greek cooking was unrivaled by any top-trained chef,” says Vranas.

Vranas fondly remembers Yiayia being able to roll three dolmathes in the time it took her to roll one. She was inspired by the intention and passion Yiayia put into every dish she made.

“We connected over the love of beautiful flavors and the good feelings that come from serving others,” says Vranas. “That kind of love crosses any language and culture barriers. I’m proud to be able to continue the tradition of sharing her memory ... with [future] generations, just as she did.”



Dolmathes in Avgolemono Sauce

Yield: Makes 50-60 dolmathes

Dolmathes Ingredients

- 60 young grape leaves (or 16 ounces grape leaves from a jar)
- 1 lb. ground lamb*
- 1 lb. ground beef
- (*or if preferred, use 2 lbs. ground lamb, or, 1 lb. ground beef and 1 lb. ground pork)
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 finely chopped large yellow onion
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh mint
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. fresh ground pepper
- 16 oz. water or chicken stock
- ¾ cup olive oil

Avgolemono Sauce

- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 room temperature eggs
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch

Dolmathes Instructions

In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground meat, rice, onion, garlic, salt, pepper, parsley, mint and oregano for the filling, and mix well.

Rinse and pat dry the grape leaves. Cut the hard stem off each leaf.

Lay a leaf top side down (so the veins face up) and place 1 Tbsp. filling on the bottom (wider end of the leaf, near the stem).

Roll the stem end of the leaf over the filling. Fold the sides in burrito-style then continue to roll the bottom all the way up to the pointy top. The rice expands while cooking so roll tight, but not too tight.

Repeat with all of the leaves until all of your filling is used.

Place the dolmathes seam side down and very close together in a pot.

Pour the olive oil, ½ cup lemon juice, water or chicken stock over the dolmathes.

Place an inverted plate over the dolmathes to weigh them down and to stop them from opening while cooking.

Cover pot with lid and bring to a boil.

Reduce to simmer and cook about 45 minutes or until the rice is tender.

Move cooked dolmathes to a serving dish.

Reserve the leftover dolmathes cooking liquid from the pot for the Avgolemono Sauce.

Avgolemono Sauce Instructions

Whisk together 3 eggs in a saucepan.

Gradually add lemon juice to eggs and continue mixing.

Slowly add warm leftover dolmathes cooking liquid from the pot (2-3 cups). Temper so you don’t curdle the eggs.

Make a slurry with the cornstarch and equal parts Dolmathes liquid and mix it in the sauce pan.

Stir constantly over medium-low heat until sauce thickens.

Add salt to taste.

Pour thickened avgolemono sauce over the dolmathes and serve.



Hickory Smoked Maple Syrup Old Fashioned

As co-owner of distillery J. Henry & Sons, it's challenging for Liz Henry to choose just one favorite cocktail that evokes special memories. But the Hickory Smoked Maple Syrup Old Fashioned — a.k.a the JoeZ Old Fashioned — definitely stands out. It's her son's favorite go-to libation to make in the distillery's tasting room.

At the AC Hotel Madison Downtown, bartender Craig Spaulding even uses small hickory wood stumps from the Henry's farm to craft the cocktail. He lights part of the stump, then places a lowball or rocks glass on top of it to capture the smoke to impart that signature smokiness in this Old Fashioned. Henry says they've given several of these stumps to local bartenders to craft the cocktail.

"Immediately, people get that warm, fuzzy, happy feeling of the smell of a campfire or somebody's wood-burning fireplace," says Henry, noting that the smoky flavor gives "you a whole different dimension of flavor in a cocktail."

Cocktails are a go-to around the holidays, because you can create something to please everyone without much hassle. Another personal favorite of Henry's, which can be served over ice or warmed up, is the farmer's cocktail. It's a mix of tart lemonade, small-batch bourbon and a mint simple syrup (which they craft in-house using mint from the Henry Farm). "It's a favorite cocktail in the tasting room, whether you're a bourbon drinker or not," says Henry.

The key to making a really good cocktail, says Henry, is using the freshest, highest-quality ingredients. Pitch anything that's been sitting in the back of your liquor cabinet for too long and start anew. She also looks forward to the changing seasons to try out new flavors.

"Every season provides a new palette of things that are available," says Henry. "It's interesting to make savory cocktails with sage and rosemary — some of those flavors that really highlight a meal and make flavors pop."

Hickory Smoked Maple Syrup Old Fashioned

Yield: One cocktail

This cocktail is easy and delicious. It exudes warmth and is perfect for sharing with friends. You'll need a slice of hickory or cherry wood for smoking the glass. Pour some alcohol on the wood surface and let it soak in, so when you apply a flame from a crème brûlée lighter, you will burn the surface until it lights a flame and then it will smoke. Place your rocks glass upside down over the smoking wood and let it rest there while you prepare the cocktail.

Ingredients

- ½ oz. maple syrup
- 3 dashes Bittercube Chipotle Cacao bitters
- 2 oz. J. Henry & Sons Small Batch Bourbon

For garnish:

- Orange twist
- Dark chocolate bar shavings

Equipment

- Rocks glass
- Stir glass
- Hawthorne strainer
- Stir spoon
- Veggie peeler, lemon zester or channel knife

Instructions

Place ice into a stirring glass. Add bourbon, syrup and bitters. Stir for 30 seconds or more until it's mixed and thoroughly chilled.

Place a large cube (2 x 2-inch square) of ice in your smoked rocks glass. Strain the bourbon out of the mixing glass into the smoked rocks glass.

Garnish with an orange peel and/or strip of chocolate shavings, if you like.





Mommies Coconut Cake

As the pastry chef at Hubbard Avenue Diner, Ashley Williams creates magic in the form of pies, cakes and cookies every day. But her most treasured sweet treat to bake is her mother's favorite coconut cake, a recipe which originated with Williams' grandmother from Sumter, South Carolina.

"In my family we would usually have it for church dinners, Christmas and Easter. But my mother, being the coconut cake lover she was, wanted it for her birthday, Mother's Day, April Fool's day — she loved it!" says Williams. "Although she passed in 2013, I know she's still enjoying it with us."

At the age of seven, Williams' mother and her family moved from Miami to Baltimore; she and her siblings had never seen snow until that first winter in Maryland. As the story goes, while Williams' grandmother tried to explain snow to her curious seven-year-old, all she could think about was how much the snow looked like coconut.

"[My mother] grabs her brother, Sammy, and sister, Vera, and runs to the door," says Williams. "With no

shoes, socks or winter clothes, they run outside, of course, with my grandmother yelling behind them.

They played for a good five minutes until my grandmother yanked them back inside to properly dress them."

The coconut cake (shown at left) was always a reminder of sweet childhood memories and her mother's first experience with snow, says Williams. "Whenever we had a family event, you could count on my mother bringing the coconut cake."



Mommies Coconut Cake

Yield: Two 9-inch round pans

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. shortening
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup + 2 Tbsp. whole milk
- 2 tsp. coconut extract
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- Cream cheese frosting (recipe below)
- 8-10 oz. coconut flakes

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. All fats, liquids and eggs should be kept at room temperature.

Sift flour, baking powder and salt into a large bowl, set aside.

In a mixing bowl with a paddle attachment, cream shortening, butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.

Add eggs one at a time. Beat until mixed well. Add vanilla and coconut extract. Mix for one minute.

Add half of the milk and half of the flour mixture to the sugar mixture. Mix on low until incorporated. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl, and mix for one minute. Add the remaining flour mixture and milk. Mix for another minute. Scrape down bowl again. Your batter should be smooth and lump free.

Spray your pans with a cooking spray and line the bottom of your pans with parchment paper. If you don't have parchment or cooking spray, grease your pans with shortening and dust it with flour. Shake out the excess flour.

Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 30–35 min. Stick a toothpick in the center of the cake; if it comes out clean, it's done.

Cream Cheese Frosting Ingredients

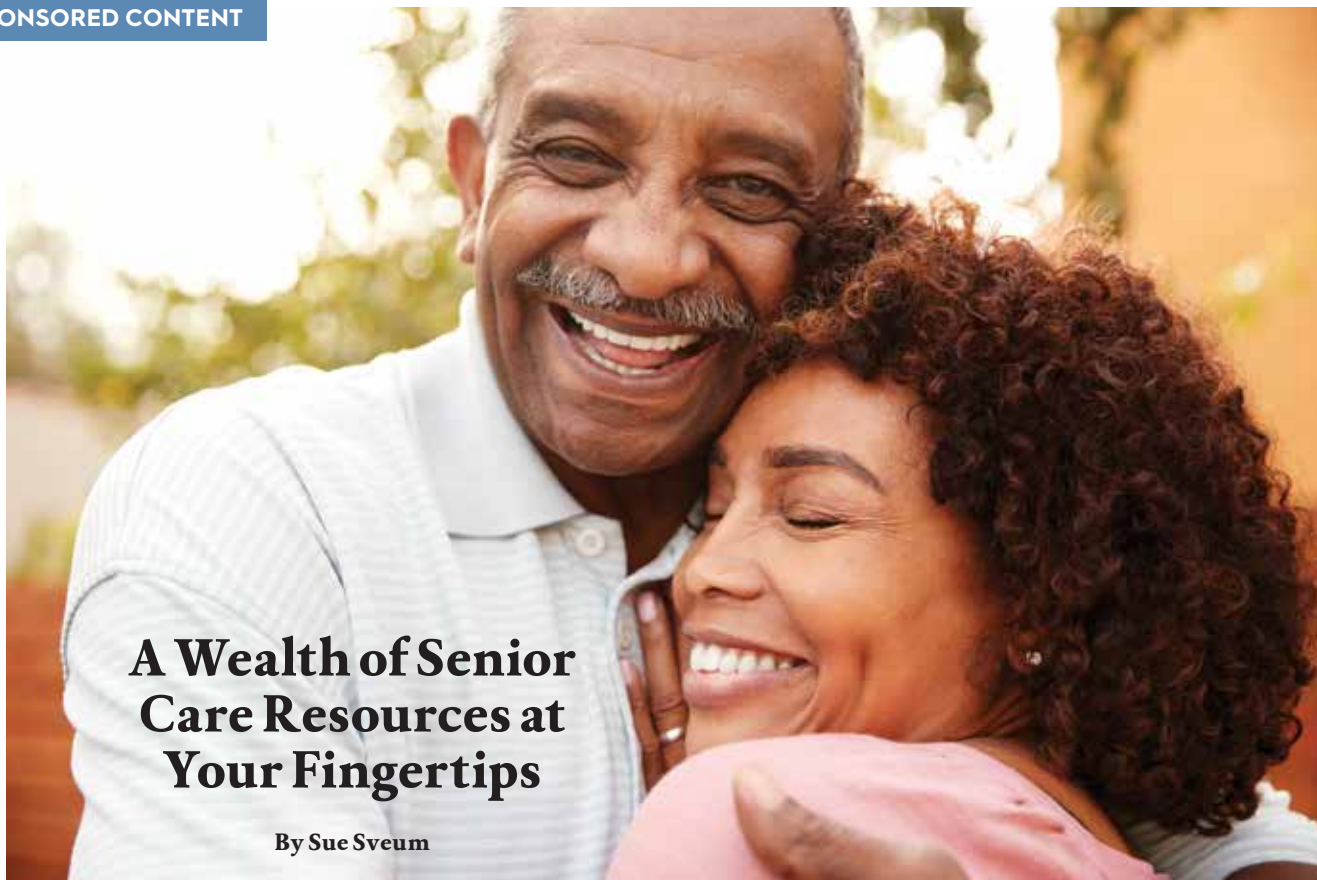
- 1 lb. cream cheese
- 8 oz. unsalted butter
- 6 cups powdered sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. vanilla
- ¼ tsp. salt

Frosting Instructions

Cream the butter and cream cheese together until smooth. Add the powdered sugar, vanilla and salt. Mix on a low speed for 3 minutes. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl and mix until smooth. Chill in an airtight container. Recipe can be doubled for those that want more frosting.

To assemble the cake:

First, level off each 8-inch cake round by thinly slicing off the dome on top of each cake to achieve a flat surface. Next, torte each 8-inch round by slicing each cake evenly in half. (You'll have four layers). Spread ½ cup of cream cheese frosting on the first layer. Stack the next layer and repeat for subsequent layers. Once the cake is stacked, crumb coat it by applying a very thin layer of frosting around the sides and top to seal in the crumbs. Chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Once it's chilled, spread the remaining frosting over the entire cake. (The final icing doesn't have to be perfect, because it will be covered in coconut flakes.) Then, pat the coconut flakes around the sides and top of the cake evenly. 🌸



A Wealth of Senior Care Resources at Your Fingertips

By Sue Sveum

The vast offerings of our health care system can often make it challenging to understand what is available and how to access it. Several local health care providers have specialized senior care programs — some of which have been around for decades, and others are recent additions that aim to make everyday living easier for you and your loved ones.

We spoke with Stoughton Health, Sienna Crest, SSM Health at Home and Agrace to learn more about what they provide for seniors and their families — with options that focus on mind, body and end-of-life care.

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH WITH AN INPATIENT CLINIC

This is likely one of the best programs you've probably never heard of: Stoughton Health's Inpatient Geriatric Inpatient Psychiatry Program. The program has been a godsend for many seniors suffering from mental health issues ranging from depression and anxiety to Alzheimer's disease and

other dementias. The program, which began in 1997, is the oldest and largest in Wisconsin and receives referrals from throughout the state — and some as far away as Florida.

Designed to meet the unique needs of those 55 and older with psychiatric disorders, the short-term program treats patients with the goal of helping them return home or find a living arrangement better suited to their current needs.

"There's a greater need for geriatric services like this today," explains Heather Kleinbrook, Inpatient Services Manager. "With our population aging, we're seeing more dementia as well as increased awareness of mental health issues like depression and anxiety."

According to program psychiatrist Dr. Amy Connell, targeting the service to the needs of those 55 and older has been beneficial to the patients and the program. "They're all from a similar age group so there's a common thread," she explains. "Activities and

therapies, even music, can be geared toward that population."

The age commonality also helps build relationships. The environment is homey, with patients generally out of their rooms, involved in an activity or socializing. "Increased socialization is important because people tend to open up more with other people around them," says Connell.

"Some patients may initially just want to shut down, but once they become engaged, they begin to build friendships," adds Kleinbrook. "And that social support goes a long way toward their success."

Although the majority of the patients have some form of dementia, unlike a typical memory care facility, the 10-bed inpatient unit within Stoughton Hospital is unique in that it is licensed by the state to treat acute needs rather than provide long-term care.

Referrals can come from patients themselves, their family or a physician. But note that a health care power of attorney (POA) does not give a POA the

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ability to admit someone to a licensed acute inpatient psychiatric unit. Admission must be voluntary or court ordered.

Kleinbrook says while there's no "typical patient," many come in with similar issues. Those with depression or anxiety may be struggling with medications or dosing. And dementia patients are often admitted due to hallucinations, paranoia or agitation.

The first order of business is neuropsych testing and the creation of a personalized care plan for treatment. Older patients often experience more medication side effects, so dosing is conservative, starting out with smaller doses.

Since patients are in various stages of treatment, activities and supportive therapies are geared to each person's ability to engage. Aromatherapy, art therapy, and coping and life skills education are among the options — with some one-on-one sessions and others involving groups or families. Connell has even brought in her dog — a definite hit among patients. "Dogs tend to have a calming effect," she says, "and

their presence leads to patients sharing stories about their own pets."

Another essential element of the program includes educating the patient's family or senior community so they can understand the diagnosis, therapies or medication used in treatment and what to expect when the patient leaves. "We really rely on family support," says Kleinbrook, "but sometimes that means encouraging them to stay away — so they get a break, and the patient has time to adjust."

A typical stay in the unit is 15–18 days, and success takes many forms. Folks with depression are more hopeful. Those with dementia are sleeping better, less agitated and more cooperative. Overall, their lives are more manageable.

"No one stays here forever," says Connell. "But some do ask if they can."

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AT AN ADULT DAY CENTER

As loved ones age, many of us find ourselves caring for family members,



and respite services can really help when this is the case. This is where Agrace comes in.

Agrace has made it their business to care for people in need for more than 40 years, beginning with hospice care. Now they've expanded their services — opening an Adult Day Center.

"We saw a need in the community for families and caregivers needing respite," explains Kewana Jamison, RN Adult Day Center manager. "[Families] want to keep their loved ones home, but can't risk leaving them alone."

The center fulfills that need by offering a place for seniors needing extra support to be safe. "It's twofold," says Jamison. "To provide caregivers a break, and [it gives] a chance for clients to socialize and get out of the house."

The center can disburse medications and provides two meals and snacks daily. Activities are designed to meet each person's unique cognitive and emotional needs, from brain exercises to physical exercises. The staff is also specially trained in dementia care.

The Adult Day Center is open weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

PEACE OF MIND WITH MEMORY CARE

For elderly adults that need more specialized care, Sienna Crest and Sienna Meadows have created exceptional facilities that take mental and physical wellness into account.

A lot goes into creating and operating a memory care community, says Sue White, president and owner of Sienna Crest Assisted Living, Inc. It's not just an assisted living facility

Sienna Crest

Assisted Living, Inc.

"When I think of Sienna Crest, I think of how wonderful everyone treats my mom."

My mom's quality of life is so much better since she has resided here at Sienna Crest. She's been a resident here for 5 years. This is her home and staff treat her like their own family. We love it!" Sienna Crest follows COVID guidelines, so you can feel confident and comfortable making the decision to move to assisted living!

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Sally, with son Dan

with locked doors. It's a safe and homey environment with specially trained and caring staff, appropriate activities and food prepared to accommodate individual needs.

"It's a higher level of care," says White. "But our philosophy is to let residents be as independent as possible, fostering and encouraging independence, while watching out for their safety."

It begins with staff training, understanding dementia and how best to interact with residents on their level. Activities are then geared to residents' interests and abilities.

The building layout at each of the four, 15- to 20-bed Sienna Crest and Sienna Meadows memory care communities features a continuous indoor "walking path" with no dead ends. Residents can walk the path for both exercise and enrichment. Because of the community's small size, a resident can be at the end of a hallway and staff can easily see them. And themed activity niches in most of the facilities along the hallway offer points of interest for residents to see and touch while providing stimulation — and evoking memories.

Each resident has a private room and most facilities have a private bath with an open door, affording them privacy while allowing staff to assist when needed. Several common areas also encourage residents to drop by and sit for a spell, rather than spending all of their time in their rooms.

"And we get to know our residents' background and interests, so we can meet them at their reality," explains



When it is time for hospice, We're here for you



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White, adding staff may go along with what a resident is saying or redirect them, but they always make residents feel heard.

“We also feel it’s important to educate families, especially those in denial about a loved one needing memory care,” adds White. “After an assessment, we’re always upfront. We want Sienna Crest and Sienna Meadows to be a good fit — for the resident, their family and our community.”

BRINGING END-OF-LIFE CARE TO THE HOME

Talking about the end of life is difficult. No one wants to think about dying or about the death of a loved one. But when it becomes clear that you or a loved one may be reaching that time, it’s important that you do talk about it, to prepare for the best end-of-life journey possible. And that’s where hospice comes in — helping patients and their families do just that.

To be eligible, a physician must

determine that they anticipate the patient has a life expectancy of six months or less. And patients choosing hospice services must be receptive to receiving end-of-life care, which includes stopping curative treatments.

“There are just so many benefits to having hospice on board,” says Janet Bollig, MSSW, of SSM Health at Home Hospice. “We focus on the patient’s quality of life, along with goals and wishes for their end-of-life journey.”

A patient’s care team may include the hospice medical director, nurse practitioner, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, along with medical social workers, spiritual support/chaplains, home health aides and volunteers. Together they develop a unique care plan for each patient that covers pain and symptom management.

“Our team focuses on making sure our patients are treated with dignity and respect,” says Bollig. “Managing physical symptoms is obviously an



essential part of hospice care, but quality of life is also impacted by mental and spiritual wellbeing. Hospice supports the whole person — physically, mentally and spiritually.”

Hospice is also unique in that the team provides care, not only to patients, but also to their family and loved ones. They’ll receive ongoing education, guidance, and emotional and spiritual support so they can prepare for the loss of their loved one, knowing what to expect and how to best care for them. This support continues for 13 months after the patient passes.

“Patients and families are encouraged to address unresolved issues, complete a life review and plan for the future,” explains Bollig. “This helps everyone to focus on comfort and peace as the end-of-life approaches.”

Most patients want to remain at home in a familiar environment, surrounded by the people and things they love most. Hospice allows people to do that, knowing they can receive all the care they need right in the comfort of their home. And as long as they meet eligibility requirements, it’s never too early to bring in hospice.

“Sooner is always better,” stresses Bollig. “The earlier a patient is admitted, the sooner our care team can begin managing pain and providing the support needed to improve the patient’s quality of life, so they can live their best life to the end. We repeatedly hear from families that tell us they wish they would’ve started hospice services sooner.” 🌸

More good days

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TENACITY



Three Madison-area families take on a range of visible and invisible disabilities with resilience, confidence and hope.

BY HANNAH WENTE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HILLARY SCHAVE

Preparing to have a baby does not always include preparing to have a child with disabilities. According to the 2019 American Community Survey (the most recent figure available), 4.3% of the U.S. population under 18 years old has a disability. Once a parent learns their child has a disability, extra care and vigilance supports and nurtures the child as they navigate life.

Several area families let us into their world of what it's like to have a differently-abled child — and how their kids are learning to adapt to their disabilities by making time for the activities they love.



Mia and Aimee Theo at Natural Wisdom Counseling with psychotherapist Jessica Dallman (right)

Mia Theo, 2 ½ Years Old

Without her hearing aids, glasses and walker, Mia Theo looks like a typical toddler. However, she was born with benign congenital hypotonia, a neuromuscular disease that causes low muscle tone and impacts oral motor skills (such as eating), walking and overall development. She also has vision and hearing loss that aren't related to hypotonia.

"It was just kind of thrown to us out of the blue," says Mia's mother, Aimee Theo. "We had no idea when I was pregnant or even right away after she was born. I didn't know right away that anything was wrong."

Mia was diagnosed during her stay in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) right after birth. The family still does not know why Mia was born with the condition.

"It doesn't really matter now, if we were prepared or not," Aimee says. "I don't know if it would have been better to know [before she was born]; I feel like maybe I would have worried more. And also kind of like, 'What happened?' Trying to explain [the disease] to people has been really challenging ... and trying to understand it myself."

When Mia was first diagnosed, Aimee and her husband, Michael, sought out support from parent groups. Wisconsin Sound Beginnings offers monthly virtual meetings on different topics related to hearing loss. The group also provides American Sign Language (ASL) support. Mia participates in the Birth to 3 program (see sidebar) and has

a Childhood Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program case manager that links her with the resources she needs. The CLTS Program provides funding and support for families who are Medicaid eligible and have children with disabilities. This allows families to care for their children at home and participate in their communities, according to Family Voices of Wisconsin, an organization that helps families with special-needs kids navigate health care needs and community services.

The family also takes Mia to Gio's Garden in Middleton, which offers respite therapy for families of children with

What is hypotonia?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, hypotonia causes low muscle tone and postural instability, meaning a child has difficulty sitting, standing and walking. It is typically detected at birth or when a child is very young, and often requires use of a walker or wheelchair as they grow. Hypotonia is a lifelong condition; however, therapy can help a child build muscle tone and adapt to the disease for the long-term.





disabilities, for three to four hours twice a week. Whether people need a few hours a week to attend a sibling's soccer game, clean the house in peace, run errands or take a nap, Gio's offers on-site care and therapy for youth with disabilities through age 6.

"Every parent needs extra help and extra support," says Gio's Garden executive director Geof Brown. "The respite break is super important because the parents are at work, then they come home, and they're trying to be a fun and loving parent, making sure their kid is happy. But they're also thinking, 'Did they get their meds at the right time; are they eating the way they should be eating; is their feeding tube working? Do I have the medical supplies I need?' These parents are managing so much more than the average parent."

"Our kids are so much stronger than we give them credit for ... I call her [Mia] tenacious ..."

— AIMEE THEO

Mia has attended Gio's Garden since she was about six months old. The staff takes her on field trips and helps with feeding strategies. Aimee and Michael started taking her there so they could spend more one-on-one time with their son Andreas, age 4. It provides respite not only for the immediate family, but for the extended family caregivers as well. And, it allows Mia to connect with people beyond her family circle.

"They [Gio's Garden staff and clients] are her people," Aimee says. "She has such a big smile when she arrives."

Mia also does weekly equine therapy at Natural Wisdom Counseling in Mount Horeb, which has been critical to the health and wellbeing of both her and her family. Aimee says the therapy has increased Mia's confidence and calls the farm her

Birth to 3 Program

The Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention program for children with developmental delays or disabilities under the age of three, run by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Hugh Davis is the executive director of Wisconsin Family Ties, a nonprofit organization that provides family support for parents of children who have social, emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. He knows the power of early intervention. His fourth child was missing development milestones, and after struggling to find services for their other child, they knew they needed to get him into the Birth to 3 program for occupational, physical and speech therapy.

Around the time he turned three, Davis says his son started talking in full, unique sentences — before he would repeat phrases or sentences he'd already heard — and was able to attend school without additional services. Davis hopes his experience as a parent can provide support and hope to others.

"We've stumbled through all of these things so we can help parents understand what their options are and what they can advocate for their kids."

Learn more about the Birth to 3 Program at dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3. Find out what Wisconsin Family Ties offers at wifamilyties.org.

"happy place." The equine therapy helps Mia build her muscle tone, strength and muscle control. Having stronger muscles is critical to improving her ability to walk, sit and stand without assistive devices like wheelchairs and walkers in the long-term. Staff there are fluent in ASL and they provide emotional support for parents as well as tips on how to navigate behavioral concerns.

"Our kids are so much stronger than we give them credit for," says Aimee. "I call her [Mia] tenacious — she's stubborn and hardheaded, and she thinks she can do a lot more than her body will allow her to, but she will not let that hold her back."



Rourke Kasper with his mom, Michelle

Rourke Kasper, 6 Years Old

Rourke Kasper is a kindergartener and a fan of all things math, science and space. The lively 6-year-old was also diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum, or as neurologically diverse, by staff at the Waisman Center. The center has an Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic that works with families on diagnosing autism and other genetic disorders, as well as provides therapeutic services.

The term “neurologically diverse” recognizes that it’s normal for people’s brains to operate differently. Use of the term began in 1998 with the goal of reducing the stigma around autism by acknowledging there are differences in how people learn and think.

In general, Rourke’s mom, Michelle Kasper, says her son appears neurotypical (which means he doesn’t outwardly display many signs of autism). For example, he can maintain eye contact and he’s very verbal. So when some of

his autism symptoms show up, she says outsiders are confused by it — and their initial reaction is that he’s misbehaving or out of control. To this day, family and friends still tell Michelle that they think there’s nothing “wrong” with her son.

Abrupt changes in his behavior and an inability to communicate his needs led Michelle and her husband, Bill, to have Rourke evaluated.

Getting Rourke diagnosed took months, and it took Michelle a full year to accept that her son was neurologically diverse. She thought that intensive therapy would “fix” him and everything would be “OK.” But after a year, she realized her son was unique and different — and that was fine.

She equates raising a child with a disability as preparing for a vacation only to find you’ve landed in the wrong country. You’ve read all of the travel books, learned Spanish and studied a map of Spain, but suddenly you’re in Italy.

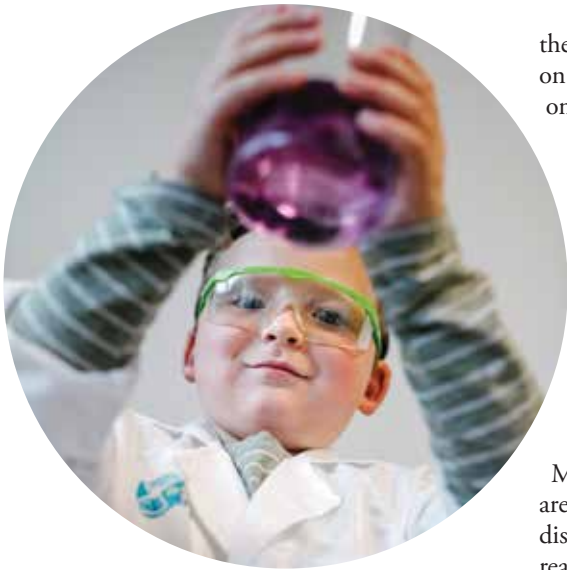
“There wasn’t a book or roadmap telling us what to do,” says Michelle. “It

was us fumbling around until we learned about the Katie Beckett Program and the CLTS [Program].”

Both programs provide funding and support for families. The Katie Beckett Program, also known as Katie Beckett Medicaid, allows children living at home with long-term disabilities, mental illness or complex medical needs, to purchase medically-necessary equipment and services allowed under the Medicaid program. Children who do not qualify for Medicaid may qualify for the Katie Beckett Program, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Michelle says caseworker Rebecca Uselman with the CLTS Program was the first person in over two years of navigating the special-needs system who asked her what her son and family needed.

“It was the first time I felt like someone was supporting us as a whole family,” she says.

Getting the support Rourke needed within the public school system was a different story.



"The biggest struggle we had was with the public education system," says Michelle. "There's a huge discrepancy between what is required to have a diagnosis of autism medically, and then what the school district sees as what qualifies a student for services. [And], every day of our life we are confronted with a new thing that we didn't prepare for, whether it's behavior aggression or a new behavior that's unacceptable at school."

Despite a diagnosis and prescribed therapy from the Waisman Center, a pediatrician and independent evaluator, it was impossible to get in-school services, according to Michelle.

Public schools in the U.S. are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to create and follow an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student enrolled in special education. The IEP includes education goals for the student and the services and support the school will offer. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, an IEP is developed, reviewed and revised by a team of family members, school representatives and occupational/physical/speech-language pathology therapists.

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) helps families navigate the state's public school special education system. DRW helps parents of younger children get their kids evaluated and even file a complaint if an IEP is not being followed. Lead advocate Phyllis Greenberger says, "We can help [families] problem solve, give

them ideas, educate them about the law on special education and discuss strategies on how they can approach school staff."

Michelle says, "We spent the better part of two years struggling, trying to convince the school district that our son did need the services that a doctor, the Waisman Center and an independent evaluator all said he did."

Ultimately, that lack of access to therapy within the public school system motivated Michelle to send him to a private school. It also led Michelle to dig into the services schools are required to provide for students with disabilities. Rourke's situation made her realize that as a family with resources, they were *still* struggling to understand eligibility and access to services like Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), a type of therapy. It led her to found an organization called Access to Autism Therapy Advocates (find the group on Facebook) to help other families advocate for their rights.

"I work for the Office of the Inspector General and my husband is an engineer," says Michelle. "We've been very lucky in our lives, but I knew there were a lot of other families out there fighting the same battles without the resources, time or ability to look at the laws to make sure their children

were being treated fairly and legally."

She wishes family, friends and employers would understand that her and Bill's whole world revolves around making sure Rourke is safe and has the treatment he needs. That includes trying to make it through Zoom meetings for work while her son is screaming during one of his in-home therapy sessions.

"We sometimes sacrifice our sanity, social life, our marriage and everything else," she says. "We're kind of not available as humans right now. Our life is about making sure that our son is OK."

Recently, Rourke enrolled in therapy at Achieving Collaborative Treatment (ACT) in Verona. They provide tailored ABA therapy and work with families on behavior modification strategies. ABA is a type of therapy that involves positive reinforcement to increase desired behaviors and skills, according to the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. It's been one of a few bright spots in finding her son the support he needs to live well.

"Before I had a child with autism," Michelle says, "I thought children with autism behaved a certain way. But it truly is a spectrum. It's made me a lot more aware of other children's behavior and a lot less judgmental of parents. Everyone's doing the best they can, and these challenges aren't always visible."



Disability Resources

These Madison- and Wisconsin-based disability organizations link families with resources to improve their quality of life.

Arc Wisconsin Expands opportunities and advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. arcwi.org

Arts for All Wisconsin Provides art classes and events for children and adults. artsforallwi.org

Disability Rights Wisconsin Provides individual and statewide advocacy and rights protection for children and adults. disabilityrightswi.org

Gio's Garden Provides respite care for families with children ages 7 or younger. giosgarden.org

Movin' Out Assists people with disabilities and their families with housing access and support. movin-out.org

Natural Wisdom Counseling Equine therapy service in Mount Horeb; staff

communicate in ASL, English and Spanish. naturalwisdomcounseling.com

Padres E Hijos en Accion Works with Latino families with children with developmental disabilities and other special healthcare needs in Dane County. padresehijosenaccion.org

Special Olympics Links people with disabilities to year-round sports opportunities. specialolympicswisconsin.org

Wisconsin Badger Camp Offers summer camps for children and adults with special needs. badgercamp.org

Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired Offers equipment, support and education for people living with vision loss. wcbblind.org

Wisconsin Family Ties Provides a training program that improves the confidence of parents of children with disabilities, offered by parents of children with disabilities. wifamilyties.org



Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (FACETS) Connects families and educators to resources and offers advocacy training. wifacets.org







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Pete, Dannie and Jayquan Jaeger

Jayquan Jaeger, 17 Years Old

The Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra (WYSO) just gained a new member: 17-year-old violinist Jayquan Jaeger. And, his musical interest is earning him college credit through the STEM Academy program at Madison College.

Jayquan was born with glaucoma. Glaucoma damages the optic nerve, which sends signals between the brain and the eye. By the time he was in middle school, Jayquan was assessed as being nearly legally blind (which parents Pete and Dannie say he was since childhood), with his vision between 20/150 and 20/200. That means he could see something 20 feet away that someone with 20/20 vision could see from 150 to 200 feet away. (In the U.S., a person is considered legally blind if their vision is 20/200 or worse while wearing the strongest corrective lenses.) According to the American Optometric Association, a person with vision between 20/70 and 20/160 has what is considered moderate visual impairment, or moderate-low vision.

Up until he was 14 years old, Jayquan was a competitive swimmer with the Monona Swim and Dive Club and Madison Aquatic Club. But,

his vision loss ended his childhood involvement in competitive swimming. An eye surgery that improved his vision left him unable to dive off the start blocks because of the force created when diving into the water could cause an infection in the tube-shunt that was put into his eye to help with the glaucoma.

The silver lining was that the end of his swimming career ushered in a musical one that had already been budding.

Back in the fifth grade, Jayquan chose to play strings instead of taking a general music class, selecting the violin because he knew it would be a challenge.

"I have perfect pitch [playing violin]," he says, "probably because I can't read music as well as other people. I have to listen to other people and repeat what they can do."

Jayquan is in three orchestras now, at WYSO, Madison College and La Follette High School, where he attends school.

His tenacity when overcoming daily challenges and combating ableism doesn't prevent him from doing what he loves most, according to his parents.

"The thing that impresses us the most is his unshakable confidence in who he is," says Jayquan's mom, Dannie. "His disability doesn't define who he is, but it is part of all that makes him amazing, and he embraces that."



Jayquan's advice for other teens with disabilities is to enjoy the things they can do. "If you have the capacity to do something, do it," he says.

He also offers words of wisdom for those who are curious about his disability, or someone's disability in general: "Find a way to ask us questions," he says. "We can feel that you're staring at us even if we can't see it. It's incredibly obvious when you want to know something, but are too afraid to ask because people have told you it's disrespectful. It is not — please ask us questions."

Dannie says so many groups and organizations have helped their family along the way. Some include: UW Health's Pediatric Ophthalmology department, the Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison Youth Choirs, Black History for a New Day, CEOs of Tomorrow, Freedom, Inc., their church youth group and Dane County Foster Care. They've given the family a sense of support and belonging.

Dannie's advice to parents of teens with disabilities is to "reach out, get new perspectives and build up a support network. There are so many people willing to help." 🌸

Hannah Wente is a freelance writer who builds community through her freelance writing and nonprofit work.



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WHY YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT LONG-TERM CARE NOW

By Joanna G. Burish

Educating clients about long-term care (LTC) is one of the main reasons I am passionate about what I do at Northwestern Mutual, and it's because of an experience I had with my dad.

In June 2015, my wonderful, strong, 75-year-old dad went to the farmers' market — one of his favorite hobbies. While at the market, he fell and hit the back of his head, and he was rushed to the ER. He had recently started taking medication, which made him dizzy. His fall caused massive internal bleeding, and the next six months were nothing short of a nightmare. He faced multiple health issues, and as he came out of his coma, he had to learn to walk, feed himself and write to communicate (he'd lost his voice due to a tracheostomy). It was hard to watch.

We had to place him at an abysmal LTC facility east of Madison, as it was the only facility available to accept him, and I ran my business by his bedside. Driving 90 miles round-trip several times a week placed a strain on my family.

One day, Dad made multiple calls for a nurse to help him go to the bathroom. After 45 minutes of no response, he took himself and fell again. At this facility, the ratio of nurses to patients was at an unacceptable level, and the care patients received was akin to a horror film. It was nothing you'd want you or your loved ones to experience when needing this type of care the most. I received the call at 7:32 a.m. on Jan. 7, 2016, that Dad was gone.

I learned two important lessons from my dad's experience. One was that I don't want my own daughter to have this experience with me when it comes to my LTC care. Second, many people believe they have a LTC plan, but they don't understand how it works. Or, they believe Medicare can pay for LTC needs. I want to help you with all of your LTC questions.



Middleton | Janesville | Delafield

Contact Joanna Burish directly at 608-658-3482 or Joanna.burish@nm.com
joannaburish.nm.com/areas-of-expertise.htm | [linkedin.com/in/joannaburish](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joannaburish)
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While links to other websites are provided for convenience and information, please be advised that except for information related to Northwestern Mutual (NM), the inclusion of, or linking to, other websites does not imply NM endorsement of, nor responsibility for, those websites.

Here are five things you need to know to assure your long-term care (LTC) plan is truly holistic, and is in place for when you need it most.

- 1. Half of us who live to age 65 will develop a need for LTC services and support in their lifetime.** Typically, in a heterosexual couple, women live longer, so they tend to take care of their spouse's LTC needs at home, often using assets accumulated in conjunction with their spouse to pay for this care. These assets become depleted by the time the wife needs LTC, and thus, she tends to receive a lower level of care. Seventy-two percent of nursing home residents are women.
- 2. Understand how Medicare works. Coverage under Medicare is very limited in terms of options.** Medicare only pays for the first 20 days of care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF). For the next 21-100 days there is a co-pay, and, after 100 days, all costs at a SNF are paid out of pocket by the patient, family or friends.
- 3. Ask your financial advisor about the full qualifications for LTC Medicare benefits, but know this:** You will first need to spend your assets down to \$2,000 to be eligible to receive any coverage.
- 4. Talk with your financial advisor for what options you do have for LTC.** There is traditional LTC insurance up to whole-life insurance options that include an accelerated care benefit. These types of whole-life insurance options offer tax-free access to LTC benefits.
- 5. Get an idea of what LTC costs are in today's market and in your area, as they will only increase in the future.**

Current monthly costs for senior care and living options in Madison, Wisconsin, range from \$2,019 per month for adult day care services up to \$9,429 for a private room at an assisted living facility.

Planning ahead will help you understand the available LTC services, and give yourself greater independence. It will also help your loved ones experience less emotional and financial stress during an already difficult time for everyone involved.

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Gift-Tastic Finds

These unique treasures (all from local shops!) prove that shopping close to home for the holidays is **way** more stylish and fun.

BY SHAYNA MACE AND SHELBY ROWE MOYER
PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY SUNNY FRANTZ

Guaranteed to Induce Smiles

Utterly unique and charming, your recipient will delight at these whimsical gifts.

(Clockwise from top left) Bohemian Bauble sterling and brass earrings, \$28, **The Regal Find**; Botanical Bright hummingbird pin, \$14, **Olbrich Gift Shop**; The Sheepish Ewe felt birdhouse, \$36, **The Regal Find**; Sanborn Canoe Company cribbage board, \$75, **Journeyman Co.**; tiger journal, \$14, **The Regal Find**; cat journal, \$8.99, **Orange Tree Imports**; Pleased to Meet coin purse, \$23, **Grasshopper Goods**; MATR BOOME bee pin, \$10, and peacock coin purse, \$8, both from **Olbrich Gift Shop**; cat vase, \$25, **The Regal Find**; OTTI earrings, \$40, **Orange Tree Imports**; The Pink Flamingos coloring book, \$12, **The Regal Find**; glass Candyland tree, \$14.95, **Fontaine**; flower tray, \$28, **Grasshopper Goods**; Shop Local mug, \$9.95, **Orange Tree Imports**; gnome ornament \$24.95, **Fontaine**; Rumpl Nanoloft puffy blanket, \$199, **Hive**; Badge Bomb Bird School puzzle, \$24.95, giraffe bud base, \$17.50, and SERRV rainbow ornament, \$12, all from **Olbrich Gift Shop**.



Haute Home

Give your giftee a taste of the good life with these sophisticated picks.

(Clockwise from top left) Leather and canvas wine bag, \$24.99, **décor**; golden hare napkin rings (set of six), \$15.95, **Fontaine**; mirrored tray and coaster set (coasters not shown), \$64.95, **décor**; Ginger Snap and Cranberry Spice cocktail mixers, \$18 each, **Journeyman Co.**; Ardmore Design cheetah napkins (set of two), \$59.95, **Fontaine**; Crayon Chick woven basket, \$39, **Grasshopper Goods**; glass paperweight, \$25.99, **décor**; Michel Design Works gardenia soap, \$11.49, and Piazza Marble cheese board, \$74.95, both from **Fontaine**; Bitter Housewife bitters sample set, \$20, **Grasshopper Goods**; Madison chocolate Co. hot chocolate tin, \$16, **Olbrich Gift Shop**; Confetti Riot tea towels, \$20 each, **Dune Gift and Home**; Zodax Nadia porcelain rose oil diffuser, \$58.99, **décor**; hackberry cutting board, \$32, **Dune Gift and Home**; Madison Chocolate Co. sea salt caramels, \$14, **Olbrich Gift Shop**; and agate coasters, \$55.99, **décor**.



Chic for Children

Up your gift-giving game for the younger set.

(Clockwise from top left) Octopus, \$30.50, **The Regal Find**; Matriarch baby bubble hair and body wash, \$36, **Dune Gift and Home**; Zolica earrings, \$14.50, Smarty Pants Paper Co. pencil case, \$10, and "Queer Heroes" book, \$22.99, all from **The Regal Find**; elly b. doll, \$42, **Dune Gift and Home**; Nooby Baby Goods blanket, \$24, and Holly Would Craft barrettes, \$15, both from **The Regal Find**; rainbow tray, \$15, **Grasshopper Goods**; Magnetic Me Space Chase pajamas, \$44, **Tradition Children's Market**; ooly colored pencil set, \$9, **The Regal Find**; Rock Your Sweatshirt Dino Wave top, \$58, **Tradition Children's Market**; Barefoot Books Kids' Garden hands-on activities, \$14.99, **Olbrich Gift Shop**; Rockyourkid top, \$44, **Tradition Children's Market**; Zolica earrings, \$24.50, **The Regal Find**; and Chewable Charm rainbow teether stacker, \$37, **Dune Gift and Home**.



Elevated Elegance

Curated for the discerning giftee, each of these items are little luxuries.

(Clockwise from top left) prAna Norfolk Sweater in gingerbread, \$89, and Crocodile Secrid mini wallet, \$110, both from **Hive**; Root Elixirs strawberry lavender soda cocktail mixer, \$8, **Grasshopper Goods**; Fenna&Fei hair clip, \$16, **Dune Gift and Home**; Tybee Eyeland beaded clutch, \$34.95, **Fontaine**; Creek + Elm earrings, \$29, **The Regal Find**; Ink + Alloy bold coconut pukalet necklace, \$59.95, **Fontaine**; glass perfume bottle, \$61.99, **décor**; What Knot hat, \$38, **Grasshopper Goods**; Under Aurora coconut oil spray, \$17, Mo&Co Home dipped beeswax candles, \$14, Aiden & Coco aromatherapy mist, \$25, glass candlestick holder, \$24, Kelly + Jones Mezcal Verde perfume oil, \$30, and Ceramics by Holly cup, \$28, all from **Dune Gift and Home**; Terroir Chocolate lavender dark milk chocolate bar, \$7.50, **The Regal Find**; WorldFinds bracelet set, \$16, **Olbrich Gift Shop**; Danica Studio bird bowl, \$24.95, **Orange Tree Imports**; and Cire' Alexandria hair stick, \$32, **Dune Gift and Home**. 🌿

SMALL TOWN Holidays

Teeming with delightful decorations and activities aplenty, these close-to-home, southern Wisconsin destinations will keep you coming back for more.

By Maura Keller



**'Tis the season for making memories
with friends and family.**

It's a magical time of year, especially in Wisconsin's charming small towns. The streets are adorned with ribbons, greenery and lights. Restaurants usher visitors in from the cold with hot drinks and tasty cuisine. And locally-owned shops offer thoughtfully-sourced goods that will make your holiday shopping a breeze. This winter, get out of town, and enjoy the quaintness of a few of our favorite historic communities — all of which are offering special events and experiences. **Check out these seven delightful destinations.**

MONROE



Take a stroll along the streets of downtown Monroe and you are bound to feel as though you've stepped back in time. Historic architectural gems complement the charming retail shops accenting the area.

Main Street has invested in lots of decorations and lighting, so there is a classic, magical feel to the entire district. Quintessential holiday music plays from the courthouse at the center of the square. Window displays are outfitted for the season. It simply feels like Christmas — not the frantic, commercialized holiday that seems to dominate, but the classic reasons why it's such a lovely time of year. We love the Santa's Workshop display that children are drawn to, and it acts as a fun family photo op.

And each holiday season, Monroe rolls out the proverbial red carpet for visitors. This year visitors can enjoy the First Thursday Shopping Night on Thursday, Dec. 2, where stores are open late for shoppers' convenience. The following night, Friday, Dec. 3, enjoy a whimsical lighted Christmas parade. Monroe's Christmas parade is full of holiday cheer and creative floats that encompass what the holidays mean for so many people.

To keep visitors warm and the holiday spirit flowing, outdoor fire pits will also be stationed on closed street areas, and there's a dedicated meet-and-greet with Santa immediately following the parade.

To complete the town's holiday festivities, Monroe will be hosting an indoor

farmers' market on Saturday, Dec. 4 and 18. Here, shoppers will relish in the unique craft vendors showcasing their wares, including handmade aprons and wood-working from Amish vendors, plus soaps and pottery. Think of it as Monroe's own Christkindlmarkt.

Prior to the indoor market, visitors can enjoy shopping on Small Business Saturday (Nov. 27) at the town's concentration of locally-owned retail shops. You won't find empty shelves or delayed shipping here.

Be sure to find Main Street's Lookbook for the Holidays, which drops in early November for personalized suggestions and what's trending this season at shops in the district. Kitchen and home goods stores make it easy to find items and decorations before you entertain, as hostess gifts, or to just indulge yourself. All in all, there are over 30 specialty retail shops in downtown Monroe.

And there are new businesses, too. Sunrise Donut Café is the perfect spot to recharge and warm up from shopping in a relaxed, modern environment that still fits in the historic building. It features a full espresso bar and all the donuts are completely customizable.

Minhas Kitchen, which is connected to the brewery and distillery, is another great place to take a tour and taste a flight of wine or beer. Bullquarian Brewhouse will satisfy beer lovers and non-beer lovers alike; especially with gourmet pizzas and appetizers.

Visitors to Monroe also love exploring

Orange Kitten Yarns to find DIY projects as we settle into the winter months and set our sights on activities we can do in the comfort of our homes. They've also got a walk-up bakery within the shop, Bäckerei Kline, which features a rotating menu and treats ranging from Berliner (Swiss jam-filled pastries) to cookies and biscuits — an ideal spot for the whole family to enjoy.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

FIRST THURSDAY SHOPPING NIGHT

Dec. 2

Shop the charming boutiques in Monroe. Local stores extend their hours to provide a relaxed holiday shopping experience.

LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE

Dec. 3

Who doesn't love a parade? And this lighted parade brings the holiday spirit to Monroe. Don your favorite winter weather gear and get in the holiday mood!

"MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET," PRESENTED BY MONROE THEATRE GUILD

Dec. 16-19

"Miracle on 34th Street" is a cherished tale that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas. Monroe Theatre Guild shares the story of when a department store Santa insists he's the real Kris Kringle, and a little girl's eventual belief makes all the difference in the world.

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Buggyworks: serving classic dinners and craft cocktails.

Bullquarian: nanobrewery and restaurant.

Burington Shoes: happy shoes. happy you!

Busy Bee Floral & Gifts: it's all the buzz. gifts & floral.

Baumgartners: legendary sandwiches & cheese shop.

Chocolate Temptation: just give in. espresso bar and chocolatier.

Mama + Little's Boutique: for all you mamas and your little ones.

Frame 'n Color: sophisticated gifting.

Heartland Graphics: game day swag. custom bachelorette & wedding items.

House to Home Designs: decorate...or redecorate.

Garden Deli: classic, relaxed deli where baked potatoes reign.

JOLLY

JoAnne's Dress Shop: better style and service. for you, your mom, and your daughter.

Luecke's: celebrating 100 years. diamonds are still a girl's best friend.

Monroe Arts Center: rotating exhibits in a must see restored 1869 church.

Orange Kitten Yarns: worth a spin. regionally sourced.

Rainbow Confections: childhood and homemade favorites. Peppermint Fudge, please.

Sunrise Donut Café: fun, customizable donuts and coffee.

Suisse Haus: pizza, pizza. classic Wisconsin setting.

Toy Haus: like it should be. games, books, clothing, and toys inspiring ages 1 to 100.

Zodica Perfumery: small batch and handcrafted. made in Monroe.

213 Mercantile: take a shot at the garland bar.

MONROE

Grab a map and complete info at mainstreetmonroe.org/brava

SHULLSBURG



The cutout paper snowflakes you taped to the windows as a child. The gingerbread cookies your mom always made for the neighbor down the street. The hand-painted dreidels your grandmother showcased on her mantel. The sing-alongs your children love this time of year.

Holiday traditions reflect and reinforce the things we care about. Traditions give us a sense of belonging and allow us to mark the holiday season in a meaningful and unique way. And one thing that has become a holiday tradition for many Wisconsin families is a visit to Shullsburg during the holiday season.

Shullsburg is in the southeast corner of the state and in close proximity to the Illinois border — and it's considered to be Wisconsin's third-oldest community. Teeming with historic sites, quaint buildings and unique venues, Shullsburg also boasts distinct Midwestern charm and natural beauty. Add to that the magical elements of the holiday season, with décor gracing lampposts and twinkling lights highlighting homes and businesses throughout the small town, and you have a perfect holiday getaway. The town's quaint downtown is filled with beautiful stores, restaurants and AirBnBs.

To truly ring in the holiday spirit and kick off holiday festivities, Shullsburg features the A Bit of Yesteryear event on

the Saturday after Thanksgiving, (this year on Nov. 27). A family-friendly event, A Bit of Yesteryear includes shopping; a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus and their beloved reindeer; an evening Christmas parade down historic Water Street; Charles Dickens-esque carolers; and, the ultimate end to the event, a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Other activities for visitors of all ages include the Fire Department's Chili Supper, a scavenger hunt and kids' activities at the library.

On Dec. 8 from 4-7 p.m., Shullsburg hosts its annual Ladies Night Out, which entails shopping, drinks, dining and living window displays along downtown. Numerous businesses in Shullsburg will stay open late and provide specials or fun activities.

Pop over to the Shullsburg Creamery and watch master cheesemakers create the state's famous squeaky cheese curds — a great gift for the cheese lovers in your life. For other cheese delicacies and gift ideas, check out Roelli Cheese House on State Highway 11. This fourth-generation artisan cheesemaker offers award-winning cheese, sandwiches and many other provisions for your next holiday soiree.

After a long day exploring all the holiday festivities that Shullsburg has to offer, it's time to set your sights on food.

When it comes to eateries, Shullsburg boasts a wealth of options for groups of all sizes, from “mom-and-pop” pizza joints to upscale venues that offer memorable cuisine. And a stop at the Water Street Market & Café to enjoy an old-fashioned malt will certainly keep you coming back for more.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

A BIT OF YESTERYEAR

Nov. 27

Features shopping, dining, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus and their beloved reindeer, an evening Christmas parade on Water Street, carolers and a tree lighting ceremony.

LADIES NIGHT OUT

Dec. 8, 4-7 p.m.

Shopping, drinks, dining and live window displays. Bring a group of friends to catch up and celebrate the season!



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WHAT SHULLSBURG IS KNOWN FOR:

- Rich Midwestern History
- Wonderful local restaurants
- Unique downtown shopping
- Cheese
- Family fun



JANESVILLE AND MILTON



From the moment you enter Janesville and Milton during the holiday season, you'll notice the streets, businesses and public spaces are aglow with lights and décor. With the abundance of scenic outdoor beauty, it is reminiscent of classic Norman Rockwell images, where small-town charm is palpable. It's an opportunity to enjoy the holidays with your family and friends in a cozy and welcoming small-town atmosphere that is filled with the spirit of the holidays and plenty of fun things to do, including outdoor activities, tours, shopping and dining — plus, more than 60 holiday-related events are held during the season.

Located less than one hour from Madison, Janesville's affordability and convenient location make it an ideal spot to visit this holiday season. Art lovers will celebrate Janesville thanks, in part, to its extensive outdoor public art collection featuring 21 large-scale murals. Visitors can take a selfie scavenger hunt to locate the art.

In addition, outdoor aficionados can enjoy the winter trails gracing Janesville and Milton. The trails are ideal for walking, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. In Milton, ice fishing on Storr's Lake, Clear Lake and Lake Koshkonong is also very popular.

When the chilly air has you longing for a bit of warmth, head over to the Milton House Museum for a tour. This is the last stop on the Underground Railroad in

Wisconsin that can still be toured. And each holiday season, the Milton House Museum offers a performance of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." This rendition invites the audience to become a part of the performance as they move with the production company through the historic Milton House campus for different scenes within the play. This year's performances will take place Dec. 3 at 7 p.m., Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 5 at 5 p.m.

Holiday visitors can also enjoy the Holiday Light Show at Rotary Botanical Gardens where guests can walk through more than one million lights and family-friendly fun. Show dates are Nov. 23, 26–28 and Dec. 2–5, 9–12, 16–23 and 26–30.

Another favorite attraction is Janesville's Jolly Jingle in downtown Janesville. From Dec. 3–5, this three-day event offers a fun family getaway, featuring a wide variety of activities for all ages, including ice skating, live reindeer, a lighted parade, live theater, a holiday market, fireworks, a tree lighting, family entertainment, kids' activities and more.

Need some Christmas tree inspiration? Check out the trees within the Lincoln-Tallman House dressed in their festive best over the holidays. With dozens of trees inside and even more outside — each sponsored by a business or nonprofit — this open house format allows guests to view everything at their own pace. Plan an afternoon or evening strolling through the

house while enjoying cider and cookies.

Of course, no visit to the Janesville/Milton areas would be complete without holiday shopping at the boutiques and vintage stores. Both communities offer lots of opportunities to cross items off your gift list.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

Dec. 3, 7 p.m., Dec. 4, 7 p.m. & Dec. 5, 5 p.m.

Located in Milton, the historic Milton House will be showcasing an interactive showing of "A Christmas Carol," whereby the audience moves with the production company through the Milton House campus as the play unfolds.

HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOW

Nov. 23, 26–28 & Dec. 2–5, 9–12, 16–23, & 26–30

Over 1 million holiday lights surround visitors at Janesville's Rotary Botanical Gardens.

JANESVILLE'S JOLLY JINGLE

Dec. 3–5

This fun, family weekend in Janesville is filled with activities for visitors of all ages, including a Christmas tree lighting ceremony, a holiday market, live reindeer, a lighted parade and a wealth of other entertainment options.



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MOUNT HOREB



When you head to the Village of Mount Horeb this season, don't be surprised if you fall in love with the small-town charm that is echoed throughout this wonderful community. Mount Horeb is unique for its quaint historic downtown. The village boasts unique shops and restaurants that celebrate the community's Norwegian heritage, while offering hip, modern goods and locally-sourced food and drink.

During the holidays, the town lights up and the streets are humming with activity. Shops stay open late every Friday in December and the business community gives back during Mount Horeb's Holiday Hospitality Weekend (Nov. 13-14), during which time customers can enjoy a thank-you treat while they shop, and the businesses collect donations to benefit the local food pantry.

New this year, the Mount Horeb Area Arts Association will be hosting a winter art tour, **HOLIDAZE Art Spree**, where you can visit artists' studios as well as peruse a group show at Martinson Hall in Mount Horeb, finding one-of-a-kind treasures for the art-lover in your life.

To have the full Mount Horeb holiday shopping experience, make it a weekend trip and stay at one of the village's local lodging properties. Sunniva Inn is a locally-owned bed & breakfast, just a short walk from the historic downtown, where you can enjoy a clean and comfortable stay amidst the charm of historic Mount Horeb.

And when it comes to holiday shopping,

it doesn't get much better than this! You can find something for everyone on your list, from chic clothing at McFee on Main to outdoor gear at Gempler's. Handmade soaps abound at Jangle Natural Living, there are tons of Wisconsin-themed goods at KELLA and Scandinavian gifts and goodies are plentiful at Open House Imports. For those who love music, you can find quality new and used instruments and accessories at Hart House Guitars. Grab amazing vintage candy stocking stuffers at Sugar Troll. And, of course, no stop would be complete without locally-produced beer at Grumpy Troll Brew Pub and hard cider at Brix Cider.

This fall and winter season the Mount Horeb business community has worked hard to create a lineup of attractions, activities and shopping opportunities that will surprise and delight the young and old alike. Through Dec. 6, visitors can enjoy Holiday Beer Boxes — a Beer Festival in a Box, a great gift for the libation-lover in your life. The Holiday Beer Boxes can be purchased online and picked up at the Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce from Dec. 15-17.

From Nov. 1-Dec. 19, Mount Horeb will be featured in the Dane Buy Local Holiday Passport, allowing visitors to shop at a participating business and get entered to win prizes. Visitors can also earn double entry for prizes on Small Business Saturday (Nov. 27).

The essence of Mount Horeb is the spirit of community. Small businesses are the

backbone of the economy, and the patrons, whether they live in town or come from another community, love the feeling of togetherness they find when they are here. All of the local businesses work together to provide a quality experience that is unmatched, whether you are stopping for an hour, a day, a weekend or a lifetime.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

FESTIVE FRIDAY EVES

Dec. 3, 10, 17

Downtown stores will stay open late the first three Fridays of December and the The Jingle Jangle Holiday Market will be hosted at District #1 Old School House on Dec. 3 from 4-8 p.m.

HOLIDAZE ART SPREE

Dec. 3-5, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

An art show and sale at artist studios and Martinson Hall in downtown Mount Horeb. mhaaa.org/events

SANTA + COOKIE WALK AT MOUNT HOREB LIBRARY

Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Meet Jorgen the Troll, and peruse and enjoy shops and restaurants in downtown Mount Horeb. Stick around for the Holiday Fire Truck Parade on Main Street at 5 p.m.

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STOUGHTON



Founded in 1847, the charming town of Stoughton is teeming with art, culture and Norwegian heritage. During the holiday season, Stoughton reminds visitors of the feel-good Christmas movies: wonderful scenes, unexpected finds and friendly shopping. And while there are many activities to enjoy in Stoughton throughout the year, the holiday season boasts a special variety of activities.

For starters, the historic Stoughton Opera House hosts national acts nearly every Thursday through Saturday, and the Stoughton Center for the Arts is also showcasing "A Christmas Story" on Dec. 3-4.

For holiday shoppers looking for unique products, Stoughton is featuring a variety of pop-up artisan shops on Nov. 27 and Dec. 4 at Chorus Public House, a chic and spacious venue exuding a classic vintage feel. You are also bound to find some holiday gift gems at the many locally-owned shops dotting the town. Overall, Stoughton has something to offer for everybody: fine art, fiber arts, home and kitchen goods, baby gifts, women's clothing, books and games.

In addition, Livsreise, Stoughton's Norwegian Heritage Center, and the variety of locally-owned shops and eateries are

some must-enjoy places. For the active person, a trip to Lake Kegonsa State Park for some late-season hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing is only a few miles north of Stoughton and is a great way to usher in the wintry weather.

All the activities and shopping are bound to leave you feeling hungry. As such, neighbors and visitors alike can sample artisan cider at Mershon's Cidery, find their favorite treats at Fosdal Home Bakery, or make themselves at home in the comfortable Viking Brew Pub. By dusk, the best place to drive by is the local Holiday Lights Show at Rotary Park, which is synced to music and enjoyed from the warmth and comfort of your car.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

STOUGHTON'S VICTORIAN HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Dec. 2-5

The Victorian Holiday weekend in Stoughton is a flavorful time filled with thousands of Christmas lights, holiday treats and all-around holiday cheer. The lights are set to holiday music at Stoughton Rotary Park, and families can enjoy kid-friendly holiday activities all weekend long.

"A CHRISTMAS STORY"

Dec. 3-4

The Stoughton Opera House hosts national acts nearly every Thursday through Saturday. During the holiday season, check out their rendition of "A Christmas Story" at this historic venue.





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BELOIT

Named “Wisconsin’s Most Underrated City” by House Method, Beloit’s Midwest hospitality and charm, numerous events, historic downtown and cultural attractions make it an ideal locale to spend a full weekend and take in the eclectic shops, cafes, restaurants and boutique hotels. In fact, the city’s beautiful waterfront and revitalized downtown offers a cosmopolitan look and feel — without losing its small-town charm.

For 29 years, the Downtown Beloit Association has organized the Grand Lighted Holiday Parade the day after Thanksgiving. The event boasts an impressive schedule of activities and attracts thousands of local community members and visitors alike. Live music, free hot chocolate, photos with Santa

and Mrs. Claus, and decorative floats are just a few of the highlights enjoyed during the gathering.

In addition, for the past 17 years, Holidazzle has helped people get in the holiday spirit while checking off some gifts on their shopping list. This unique evening shopping experience in historic Downtown Beloit showcases dazzling holiday window displays, carolers and music. More than 25 shops stay open late to give visitors more time to shop. And there’s even a trolley that visitors can enjoy, making the city look like a scene from a Hallmark Christmas movie.

As the “Most Romantic Main Street” award winner, Beloit is also an ideal holiday respite for couples who are eager to embrace the winter festivities and enjoy a fabulous food scene. The city’s luxurious and unique boutique hotels range from the Ironworks Hotel, which is complete with exposed brick and expansive river views, to Hotel Goodwin, located downtown, which exhibits a mixture of classic charm and modern luxury. Beloit’s only bed & breakfast, 1810 Emerson House, is located in an elegant, residential neighborhood near historic Beloit College.



Holiday HAPPENINGS

GRAND LIGHTED HOLIDAY PARADE

Nov. 26

Enjoy the parade, along with live music, hot chocolate and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

HOLIDAZZLE IN BELOIT

Dec. 3, 5-9 p.m.

Businesses sparkle and light up downtown Beloit for this award-winning event.

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BOUNTIFUL BAKERY

It's time for a sweet treat.

BY CANDICE WAGENER



[bayk] MADISON

For those of us that love our baked goods, there's no shortage of bakeries popping up around town. We've got some ideas for where to go the next time your sweet tooth is calling.

[BAYK] MADISON

Since 2018, Susan Kay has been filling a niche in the bakery market in Madison with babka. This layered bread is made with a rich brioche dough, offered in over 35 varieties including sweet, savory and boozy, and with flavors like chocolate hazelnut, iced cranberry orange or rum-soaked cinnamon raisin streusel.

Kay makes her fillings in-house, using local ingredients like eggs, basil, pumpkin, rhubarb and maple syrup. The process of making babka takes 24 hours, creating a loaf consisting of "many layers, twists and turns throughout," says Kay.

Although [bayk] may be the only place baking babka in Madison, you can find their loaves at their online shop, retail store on the east side (Thursdays only), Metcalfe's, Brennan's and the Monroe Street Farmers' Market. baykmadison.com

THE HOUSE CAFE & BAKERY

Although New Glarus's The House Cafe & Bakery is only open for takeout and phone orders currently (indoor dining

is closed), their bakery case still touts specialties that are not to be missed, many of which are vegan and gluten-free. The hazelnut cream pie is a diner favorite: house-made graham crackers compose the crust, which is filled with a thin layer of chocolate ganache, then espresso chocolate pudding filling folded with heaping scoops of fresh hazelnut butter, and the entire pie is topped with a layer of pure coconut cream. "It's a pretty rich and velvety-smooth dessert that is perfectly sweet and suitable for many dietary needs," says owner Kaylee Walters. thehousecafeandbakery.com



The House Cafe & Bakery

TOP, LEFT: SUNNY FRANTZ | RIGHT: COURTESY THE HOUSE CAFE & BAKERY



LE C'S PATISSERIE & TEA HOUSE

State Street's newest bakery holds treats that are both delicious and gorgeous. The mousse cakes are wondrous: crafted into shapes like green apple, tangerine or mango and accompanied by the same flavored filling, these flavorful treats are then dipped in white chocolate which forms a shell for fruitful art.

Le C's is known for their Japanese cheese souffle cake and a variety of Asian treats. Pair your dessert with one of the many bubble tea offerings and your indulgence will be complete.

Owner (and cake baker) Quinny Chen says, "We just want people to try our stuff. It may be very different from what you expected, but it won't disappoint you." lecsmadison.com



YUMMEE

It's what you'll say after your first bite, but the name has a deeper meaning. Owner Yeng Yang wanted to honor his mom, Mee Xiong, who ran Yang's Fresh Produce stand at the Dane County Farmers' Market for three decades (while raising eight children).

Yummee has both a storefront on University Avenue and a stand at the Dane County Farmers' Market. Your best bet is their trademark Famous

Ooey Goey Chocolate Chip Cookie, a six-ounce cookie that's crisp on the outside with oozing chocolate and cookie goodness on the inside. If you lean toward savory, try their Hot and Spicy Cheese Bread. Don't miss out on their selection of bubble teas, either. yummeetreats.com 🌸

Candice Wagener is a freelance writer who enjoys telling stories that inform, intrigue and inspire.

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GIFTING GOODIES

Look no further than the delicious offerings by Madison food producers for gift ideas.

BY CANDICE WAGENER

MADAME CHU

Owner Josey Chu wanted “to fill the void of Southeast Asian flavors in the market,” and share the flavors of her grandmother’s Singaporean recipes by recreating a collection of sauces and pastes. Offerings include sambal nyonya, a deep red chili paste; ginger garlic sauce; and satay peanut nyonya, a dense paste that balances the heat of peppers with the richness of peanuts. madame-chu.com



UGLY APPLE

Locals may be familiar with the Ugly Apple food cart, which has been creating delicious breakfast fare out of discarded produce “seconds” since 2016. Chef and owner Laurel Burleson’s latest venture includes her jams, jellies and marmalades, all made using imperfect produce from local farms. Flavors change depending on what’s available. Strawberry basil, rhubarb bourbon and plum chamomile have all been in the rotation. uglyapplecafe.com



RUSTY DOG COFFEE AND 6&12 TEA CO.

Rusty Dog Coffee offers fresh-roasted specialty coffee, either in bags or as a subscription service. Aficionados will appreciate the depth in flavor between varieties, sourced from co-ops primarily located in South America.



Their sister company, 6&12 Tea Co., offers an organic lineup of teas with flavors like Blue Rooibos herbal tea and Golden Turmeric chai. rustydogcoffee.com

THE CIDER FARM

Made from their organically-grown apples harvested from their Mineral Point-area orchard, The Cider Farm produces small-batch, fine ciders. Varieties include Cyser (fermented apple juice sweetened with honey), oak-aged and rosé.

Also look for their apple brandy maple syrup and their five-year apple brandy, which they released in late spring. theciderfarm.com



OFF THE BLOCK

Every jar of Off the Block salsa supports youth programs organized through Mentoring Positives, a nonprofit started by Will Green to help at-risk youth in Dane County. Youth are actively involved in the salsa production. Mild and spicy varieties can be purchased at Metcalfe’s, Regent Street Market and Willy Street Co-op, as well as online. offtheblock.store

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COOL KIDS, SPECIAL FAMILIES | When we spoke with three area families who have differently-abled kids, we were blown away by their can-do attitudes and talents.

Top: Jayquan Jaeger (17 years old) had at least five eye surgeries between the ages of 10 and 15 for his glaucoma, say parents Dannie and Pete. Now, Jayquan's thriving and plays violin in three Madison-area orchestras.

Right: For the past year, Aimee Theo says her daughter, Mia (2½ years old), was hesitant to ride horses at Natural Wisdom Counseling, an equine therapy facility she attends weekly. But recently, she was overjoyed that she and psychotherapist Jessica Dallman got Mia to saddle up. Mia has hypotonia, which causes low muscle tone, and riding horses helps her build stronger muscles.

Bottom: Six-year-old Rourke Kasper brought one of his science kits to our shoot to show off his scientist skills. His mom, Michelle, has been Rourke's advocate to get him the help he needs (he was diagnosed as on the autism spectrum) and helps other families advocate for their special-needs kids, too. 🌸





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