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Ballet Des Moines: page 80.

On the cover: "Folksinger," a Griffith Buck Rose bred in Iowa, thrives in Rebecca and Bob Shaw's Clive garden. See story, page 72. Photographer: Duane Tinkey.

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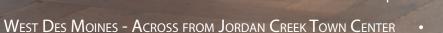


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Our virtual dinner party for the annual People issue.





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# **"ONE DAY** WE'LL LOOK **BACK AND** SAY, 'WE DI THAT. WE MADE "

Michael Egel, general and artistic director of Des Moines Metro Opera, on "A Thousand Acres," a new opera DMMO has commissioned. See story, page 88.

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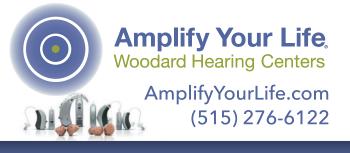
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dsmWeekend: Discover fun doings on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

ia: Explore the best of what lowa has to offer, including destinations, homes, dining and more.

### TUNE IN

Listen to *dsm*'s CultureCast podcasts featuring local restaurants, cultural organizations and artists. Recent podcasts have included conversations with artist Robert Moore and teenage musician EleanorGrace (pictured). Find the podcast on Spotify, Stitcher, Apple Podcasts and Google Play Music.

### LOG ON

We're easy to find-dsmmagazineon the web, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

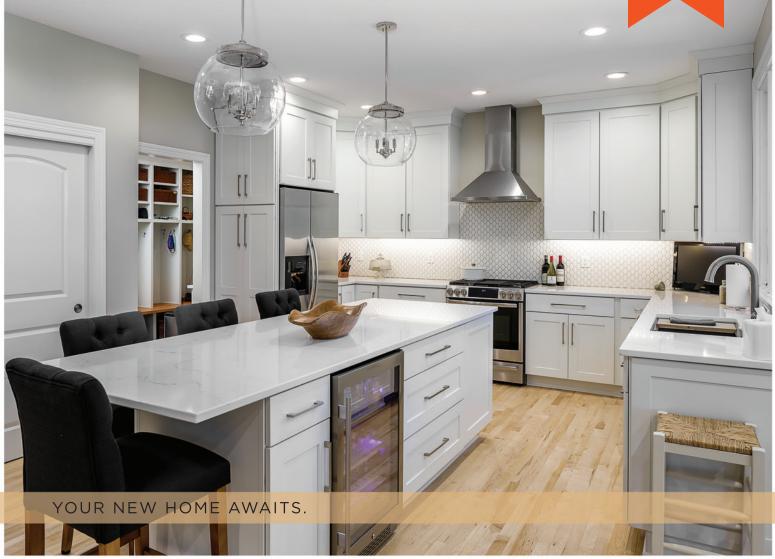
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On dsm's Culture Cast, 17-year-old singersongwriter EleanorGrace talks about the experience of watching her song "Lighthouse" reach more than 500,000 streams on Spotify. She released her newest song, "American Beauty," in March.

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### HOME AND AWAY

t *dsm*, our focus is on all things Greater Des Moines as we seek to cover the intriguing people, places and things that make our community such a great place to live.

Despite our love affair with the city, though, we sometimes want to, well, leave it for a bit. The pandemic obliterated travel plans for nearly everyone; my husband and I, for instance, last year canceled trips to Key West and Italy and instead drove to a remote northern Minnesota lake for a four-day getaway—and that's the sum total of our travel since February 2020.

But as vaccinations move along, the outlook for summer travel grows brighter by the day. With that in mind, we produced a special section on road trips we know you'll enjoy (page 101). Jane Burns, a former Des Moines Register reporter who now lives in Madison, lets us in on how to get the most out of 36 hours in Wisconsin's capital city, where the outdoors reigns. But don't rush to get there; instead, follow one of managing editor Beth Eslinger's meandering routes through our state (page 108). You may be surprised by what you discover,



whether you stop to eat cheese or admire architecture, grab a brew or paddle a river.

I FIRST MET **Michael Egel** in 2013, when he was named general and artistic director of **Des Moines Metro Opera**. While it would have been intimidating for anyone to follow in the footsteps of the late Robert Larsen, the company's legendary co-founder, Egel met the challenge with aplomb.

Indeed, DMMO's innovation has been continual over the past eight years, and we at *dsm* are pleased to be the first to announce the latest—and biggest—example of that: a \$1 million commission of **"A Thousand Acres,"** based on Jane Smiley's Pulitzerwinning novel, which the company will present during its 50th anniversary season next year. Read about the fascinating project in the story starting on page 88.

FOLLOWING THE REGULAR issue of *dsm*, you'll find this year's annual edition of **Inclusion**. We remain dedicated to elevating and celebrating our community's rich diversity, especially in a time when diversity, equity and inclusion are at the forefront of our nation's, and our community's, consciousness.

When it comes to this year's Inclusion stories, I'm like a mother who simply can't choose a favorite child. I love them all (and I promise you will, too). Still, I was especially moved by the story by Rachel Vogel-Quinn on mothers who came to lowa as refugees and their daughters. Despite the unimaginable hardships they've endured, these women not only have built new lives here but have helped others along the way. I hope our city will continue to open its heart to immigrants, who ask for so little but add so much to the fabric of our community. ■

### # yourstylist JEN CARRUTHERS & her stylist KATIE JO





ONE WORD AFTER ANOTHER JAMES A. AUTRY

### REMEMBERING MOTHER

Whenever I think about Mother's Day, my mind always goes back to the time my father left our home in Memphis and did not return. He took his secretary with him.

My mother had studied art at an all-girls Baptist college in Mississippi and was not prepared to support a 6-year-old son and herself. She tried to teach art, but there was no money in it. A lack of income drove us to move from our nice neighborhood to Lamar Terrace, a federal housing project.

In those days, just as World War II was beginning, Mother went from one low-wage job to another, and in the process learned a lot of lessons she'd never dreamed of about power, about class and status, about men who accosted her with no provocation at all, one of them asking her once in front of me and before I knew what it meant if she would like to have a bedfellow.

After working in five-and-dime retail sales and briefly on a "war plant" assembly line, she got a job at the local utility company, working "in an office," a distinction that seemed to mean a lot to her. A few years later, Mother made a great breakthrough when she learned to use a comptometer machine, which for its day was a super adding machine/ calculator, thus improving her status and her pay slightly. I remember being



proud and impressed when at church she told people about her job.

"What do you do at the light company, Ruth?" the ladies would ask, those Southern women being somewhat suspicious of a divorcee as well as of any woman who worked outside the home. "I am a comptometer operator," she would answer, her voice rising in the middle of the sentence, imbuing it, I'm sure she thought, with special and substantial meaning.

But even a better job did not solve our money problems. I did not realize how bad those problems were until the day the local grocer intercepted Mother and me at the door and said we could not buy anything more until the bill was paid.

That experience—of being denied credit, of seeing my mother's tearful embarrassment, of feeling hostage to someone's control over what I could buy and even over what I could eat stays with me still.

I really don't know how she did it, but despite our circumstances, Mother pushed me to go to college, many times telling me that "they can't take an education away from you."

In her later years, she started painting again, changing from the landscapes of her student days to what *Continues on page 26* 

Above: In her later years, Jim Autry's mother started painting again, focusing on scenes from her life in rural Mississippi. This one hangs in Autry's home.

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GIVE



KARLA WALSH



### A HUG FOR MOM

I still remember my exact location on the interstate when I picked up the call. My dad, who never reaches out to chat, was on the line. "Are you driving?" he asked. "If so, can you pull over?"

My palms started to sweat. I drove in silence to the next exit, subconsciously slowing down along the way, in some attempt to delay the inevitable. I wanted to postpone, ever so slightly, the bad news I knew awaited me once I found a place to park.

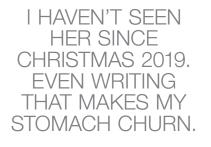
"OK," I managed to get out.

"Your mom had a seizure last night. We don't know why or what it means, but she's awake and OK and getting tests. Please come as soon as you can," Dad told me.

On the four-hour drive to the hospital, I had a lot of time to reflect on the winding, detour-filled road my mom and I have metaphorically driven together. While I kept my eyes on the road, my mind wandered back to a vivid movie montage, of sorts ...

By reading each and every day, she taught me the power of language

and the words I now write every day as a freelance journalist. On family road trips, she'd often say, "Are you enjoying the scenery?" to remind me and my two sisters to take a moment to soak up the beauty and the gifts around us. She's the one who lifted my chin up when



I was bullied in junior high school. She lined up the treatment I needed—the treatment that helped save my life when I nearly starved myself to death while battling anorexia. She's the one I call in tears after breakups and in joyful giggles when I receive good news. She's the person who most often makes me laugh until I cry with her silly oneliners. She's always there with a hug when I most need it, which is always accompanied by what has become her affectionate tagline: "Here's one of these." ("These" being her warm hug, and her preferred method of saying "I love you.")

The tests determined that she had a golf ball-sized noncancerous tumor between the left and right lobes of her brain. The next several weeks were a blur, as the doctors added her to the surgery schedule, then tackled a sixhour operation to remove the growth. She then entered physical and speech therapy and rehab to relearn all of her skills like the math she used to teach to junior high students and the lists she used to make to help her save time at the grocery store. (I will forever make those same lists.)

By the time COVID-19 arrived here, she was back to her gardening, crossstitching, daily Sudoku puzzle-rocking self. But her immune system took quite *Continues on page 26* 

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#### **One Word After Another**

Continued from page 22

she called her "memory pictures." These were scenes from her life in rural Mississippi done in a primitive style. She began to exhibit in local galleries, and I persuaded her to take a collection of works to a large arts and crafts fair near Atlanta.

I had told her to put prices on each painting only to find that, with her usual modesty, she'd priced them so low that, using a marker, I simply added digits to change the prices. For instance, I would change her price from \$35 to \$335.

"You can't do that, Jimmy," she exclaimed. "Nobody will pay that."

We drove home the next day with an empty station wagon. It was wonderful to see her so happy, a professional artist at last. At one point, I persuaded her to put aside some paintings for the family, and several now hang in my home.

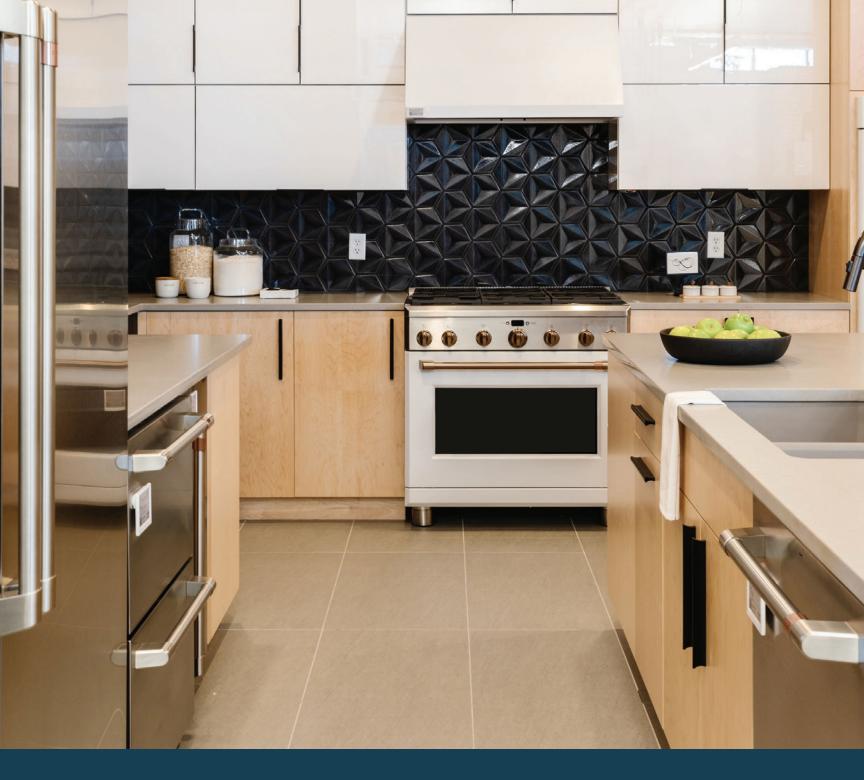
James A. Autry of Des Moines is a wellknown author, poet, musician and business consultant who has written 15 books on such topics as gratitude, servant leadership and his Southern boyhood. This essay is adapted from his book "Confessions Of An Accidental Businessman."

#### **No Filter**

Continued from page 24

a hit through the surgery, and even though we have talked on the phone nearly every day of the pandemic, I haven't seen her since Christmas 2019. Even writing that makes my stomach churn. But I'm hoping by the time you have this issue in your hands, my mom will have been vaccinated and I have given her a huge "one of these" to make up for lost time. ■

Karla Walsh is a freelance writer and restaurant brand manager. You can follow her on Instagram @karlawalsh and if you want to connect, contact her at karlawalsh@gmail.com.



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### DES MOINES MAKER SKETCH ARTIST

For most of us, cartoons were something to read while scooping up breakfast. For Nathan Wright, they were something to create. "Art has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember," Wright says, who created his first picture book with a paint pen and felt

pages at age 4. "My writing abilities weren't quite formed yet, so the words were dictated to my mother and she wrote them down.

"Mom deserved and received a co-publisher credit for her contributions," Wright adds with a laugh.

As an adult, Wright sketched as a side gig, eventually quitting his corporate job in 2016 to pursue illustration full time. He now has a bustling Etsy business and in 2019 published a book, "Office Creatures: An Illustrated Field Guide," available on Amazon.

"All the garbage stored in the back of my brain eventually becomes useful in some way," he says. "Office Creatures," for example, was inspired "by working in office environments for two decades, where I encountered all sorts of halfwits and morons. I started documenting them in a sketchpad and it eventually mutated into the book."

Bill Watterson's "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strip has been a major influence on Wright's illustration style, sense of humor and worldview.

Watterson "told such funny, complex and heartbreaking stories with simple strokes of the pen," he recalls. Wright tries to capture such stories through his daily sketches on cards, coloring pages, posters and even via "graphic recordings," which he explains as live "visual artifacts and scribing of conference sessions, keynotes, meetings and team retreats" to commemorate event highlights and meeting takeaways.

He finds additional inspiration from other local artists, comics and the film industry. "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" was especially "mind-blowing," he says.

Just like Watterson's work did for him, Wright hopes each of his creations "brings people a brief moment of joy in a world that is relentlessly cruel, unfair and chaotic."

See Wright's latest work or place an order at nathantwright.com.

–Karla Walsh

NATHAN WRIGHT

## 31 FOCUS



### WHAT YOU'RE SWEATING TO TUNING IN AND TONING UP

As the pandemic has dragged on, more and more people are staying fit and gaining strength at home rather than working out at the gym: About 80% of Americans who exercise regularly report they'll likely permanently break up with their gyms post-pandemic if they already haven't done so.

With the popularity of the customizable Sweat app, the dancefocused Obé fitness, and the uberconnected Apple+ workouts, it's clear the movement of tuning in and toning up is showing no signs of slowing. So we asked three locals what app-based workouts they love the most. (Note: These are all subscription-based.) Christa Phillips, 38, vice president of tax operations at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, works out to Glo, a yoga and pilates app: "I like being able to search what I feel I need for each session, depending on how much time I have or what sort of movement my body needs. It's super convenient because I can access a huge library of classes on my phone or through my Apple TV app."

### Josh Dreyer, 39, marketing director at Willis Automotive, exercises to

Hydrow: "The indoor rowing machine's app gives you a total-body workout and lots of sweat—in as little as 15 minutes. The live and on-demand classes are fun, too, since the instructors are actually rowing along with you from rivers across the country. It also has on-mat classes, yoga and more, so it fills all the gym gaps."

### Lauren Patrick, 31, a dentist with University Dental Group, received a Peloton bike last year as a birthday

**gift:** "At the time I was struggling to find balance with a new baby. Turns out working out at home has been the new norm for everyone. Peloton allows me to show up with whatever time I have to give and, more importantly, maintains the community I appreciated so much about going to a physical gym."

–Karla Walsh



### high 5 KUUKU SAAH

Kuuku Saah, president of the Des Moines Music Coalition, can't wait to enjoy live music with large groups again. In the meantime, Saah, who loves blues, jazz, R&B and hip-hop, has been attending local shows with safety protocols in place. Here are some of his favorite spots to listen to live music.

### 1. WOOLY'S (pictured)

One of the few Des Moines venues where you can see national touring acts on weeknights. (504 E. Locust St.; woolysdm.com)

### 2. CARL'S PLACE

The house band, Fat Tuesday, plays on Tuesday nights. After the first hour or so, the show is an open jam. (*1620 Woodland Ave.; facebook.com/ CarlsPlaceDSM*)

### 3. NOCE

"This jazz venue is near and close to my heart," Saah says. "Co-owner and operator Max Wellman has done an incredible job keeping the doors open throughout the pandemic." (1326 Walnut St.; nocedsm.com)

### 4. THE LIFT

An intimate setting for new artists to play acoustic sets. There are also great martini, cocktail and beer options. (222 Fourth St.; @dmlift)

#### 5.80/35

This two-day music festival (July 9–10 this year) brings big names to Des Moines while also promoting local acts. Some performers who appear go on to do amazing things, such as Lizzo in 2016, Saah notes. (80-35.com) –Luke Manderfeld



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### NEW AND NOTABLE SKATEPARK SET TO OPEN

After a decade of discussion—and with the design revealed nearly two years ago—Des Moines is set to unveil the nation's largest skatepark. The grand opening of Lauridsen Skatepark will be May 22.

What's more, as this issue was going to press, the Adventure Sports Network Group announced that its annual "Dew Tour" competition will be held May 20-23 at the skatepark and will serve as the only U.S.-based Olympic skateboard qualifying event for 2021. (Skateboarding will make its debut at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, July 23-Aug. 8.) The event, which is expected to generate some \$4 million for the local economy, will draw athletes from around the world.

Developed by the city of Des Moines and Polk County, Lauridsen Skatepark occupies 88,000 square feet of downtown riverfront property at 901 Second Ave. and will be overseen and maintained by Polk County Conservation.

The \$7.5 million project was funded through a public-private partnership, with the largest private donation coming from the park's namesake, the Lauridsen Family Foundation, which chipped in \$1.6 million. The city and county each provided \$600,000, and the park received a state grant for \$500,000. The rest was raised from nearly 60 additional individual donors and businesses.

"This was a true public-private partnership bringing business, individuals and governmental entities together," says Kami Rankin, the community outreach supervisor for Polk County Conservation.

In addition, the nonprofit organization Skate DSM was formed in 2019. It seeks to raise money from 1,000 grassroots contributors and is developing programming, including clinics and exhibitions, for the skatepark.

The park features a professional-

level course design appropriate for both amateur and world-class events. The terrain ranges in depth from 5 to 10 feet and features skate bowls, a promenade, stairs, ledges and more.

The skatepark also includes a street course and a lipstick red art installation that spells "WOW." It's fully skateable as well.

As of press time in March, the project was expected to be completed around May 1. Once done, the park will be soft-opened to the public until the May 22 event, which Rankin says will include a ceremony following COVID safety protocols.

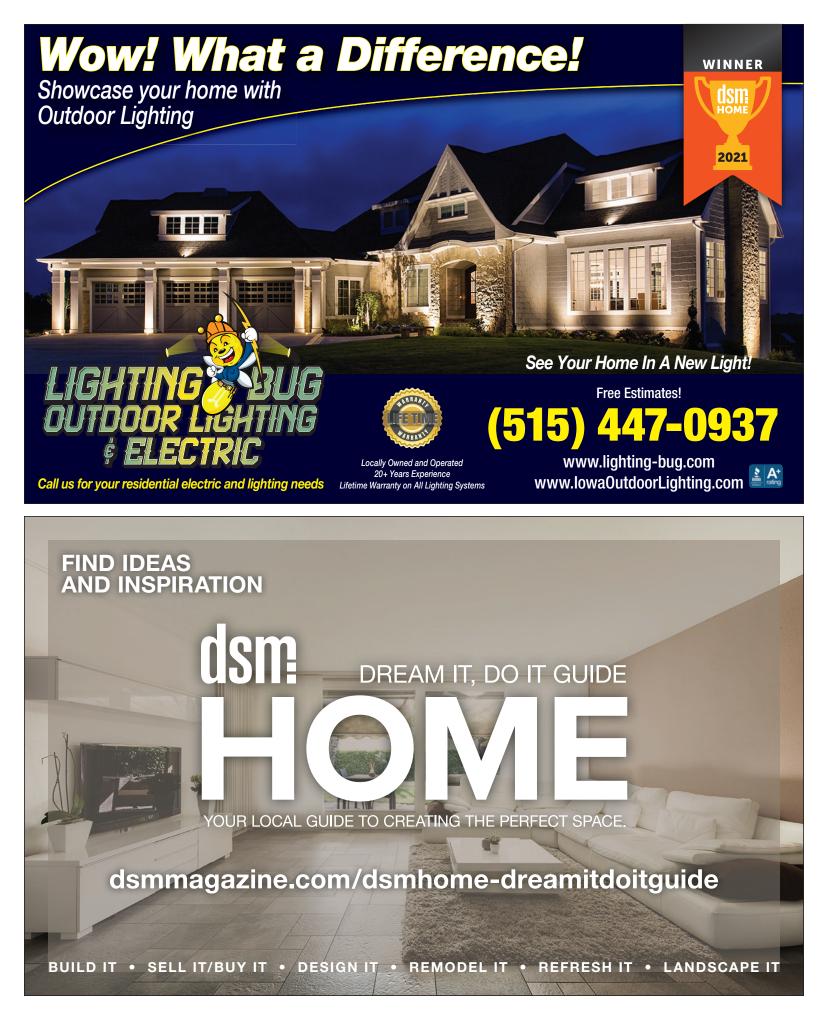
Rankin says she expects the park to become a must-see for skate enthusiasts around the country. "What we are hearing from the skatepark community," she says, "is that the Lauridsen Skatepark is on every skateboarder's vacation destination list." — *-Chad Taylor* 



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OUTDOOR BRUNCHES // GRILLED CHICKEN // VINAIGRETTE TIPS // TASTY STEAKS

> Old Station Craft Meats in Waukee sells bacon, steaks, sausages and more. Find out the owner's favorite steaks for grilling on page 44.





### WHAT WE LOVE AL FRESCO BRUNCH SPOTS

Patio season can't come soon enough for diners—and for local restaurants that could use our support. So for Mother's Day, a date or any day that could use a flavorful start, consider these patios for brunch.

### Most Crowd-Pleasing Menu Eatery A

The brunch menu at this Ingersoll hot spot is just as eclectic as its dinner offerings. That means you can take your meat-and-potatoes dad or your vegan cousin-the variety will be well-received by both picky and adventurous eaters. The Shakshuka, a cast-iron skilletbased dish of fiery San Marzano tomatoes, chickpeas, a soft egg and crumbled feta, comes with a side of sumac-spiced flatbread to sop up every drop. Or if you prefer a sweet start, try the blueberry compote-drizzled Lemon Ricotta Pancakes. (11 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday-Sunday; eateryadsm.com)

### Top Outdoor View Trellis Cafe

With a monthly menu that changes even more than the seasons, Trellis' plantforward cuisine is the perfect match for its setting inside the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. Sit on the patio for a beautiful west-facing view of the downtown skyline and to be



surrounded by the water and flower gardens just a few feet away. Grab a table in the window-lined dining room if Mother Nature isn't cooperating. Save time and a bit of appetite for a dessert from sister brand Doré Bakery. (11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday; dmbotanicalgarden.com/ visit/dine)

### Best Fusion El Guapo's Tequila + Tacos

Located on the Waukee/West Des Moines border, this Mexicaninspired cantina (a sister property to Gusto Pizza Co., Juniper Moon, Aposto and the Breakfast Club) is fairly new to the brunch game. Snag a table on the colorful patio, which was upgraded last summer, for some vacation vibes as you dig into egg-topped adobo chicken chilaquiles or a churro waffle. Wash it all down with a Bloody Maria, which subs in tequila for vodka. (11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday; elguaposiowa.com)

### Most Budget-Friendly Spot The Dam Pub

You might know its south-side sibling, Angry Goldfish, but you should get familiar with this Beaverdale pub/ restaurant—especially in the a.m. With rooftop dining and a small streetside patio, the pub offers a hearty menu featuring bacon, sausage and egg breakfast pizzas; doughnut burgers; and spicy breakfast lasagna. For the 21-plus crowd, try a mimosa bucket that comes with a few juice options and a bottle of bubbly. (Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; dampubdsm.com) —Karla Walsh



### I SNAGGED THE RECIPE SPRING CHICKEN

Chalk it up to an unpredictable 2020 or maybe cooking one too many recipes from Ina Garten's new cookbook, "Modern Comfort," during the pandemic, but something has me on an elevated comfort food kick.

What's coming out of the kitchen at the Surety Hotel's Mulberry Street Tavern (206 Sixth Ave., suretyhotel.com/ food-and-drink) has been hitting the spot since my first visit in January. So after thinking about the half chicken entree I devoured during that dinner, I asked chef Marque Collins to dish how we might re-create it at home.

Turns out, it's similar to what he and his wife, Erica Franklin Collins, might enjoy if both were off the clock. "Erica and I like to make pasta at home, and often spend summer evenings grilling," he told me.

Cooking hasn't always been in the family, though. "Growing up, my family wasn't super into cooking beyond my grandmother's holiday meals," Collins says. "It wasn't until I was a preteen that I became more interested in cooking. I remember watching Emeril Lagasse and Anthony Bourdain on TV. Those greats inspired me to try more and more things at home and on my own."

He didn't think about it as a potential career until he was having second thoughts while applying to law schools—and reflecting on what he was passionate about. "I started to apply,



then pulled out to pursue working in restaurants," Collins says.

This took him from Gainesville, Florida, to a nearly decade-long stint in Chicago, and now to downtown Des Moines last November. "One of the biggest lessons I learned in past kitchens and my home is to not waste anything," Collins says. "At home specifically, I try to work with what I have and make things from there, being a little more flexible and improvisational."

In other words, think of this juicy grilled chicken recipe as a guide, and customize it with whatever tweaks you see fit. *–Karla Walsh* 

Recipe on page 42

### **CHEF'S TIPS**

### BYOB (be your own butcher).

Spatchcocking is a butchering technique that debones the chicken but keeps the skin intact. "It can take a little practice, but once you get the hang of it, you can grill chicken quickly, evenly and with deliciously charred skin," Collins says. To DIY, lay the chicken breast-side down on a cutting board, carefully use kitchen shears to snip along one side of the back bone all the way down; repeat on the other side. Flip the chicken over. Using a bit of force, press the breastbone down using the palm of your hand, until you hear a pop and can press the bird flat. (BBC Good Food has a great video.)

Get saucy. You can find both Aji Amarillo ("a chile paste made from yellow peppers native to Peru," Collins explains) and Kewpie mayo online at select global grocers. Collins prefers Inca's Food Aji Amarillo.

Think fresh. Make the brine your own by dressing it up with your favorite fresh herb(s). Just don't skip the brining step as it's crucial to keep the chicken juicy.

Take it indoors. If the weather isn't amenable or you don't own a grill or a grill pan, make the chicken in the oven. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees, and roast the chicken for 20 minutes. If after 10 to 15 minutes the skin starts to take on too much color, place a piece of loosely tented foil over the top.

### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Large pot or bucket for brining
- Chef's knife
- Kitchen shears (if trying the spatchcocking)
- Meat thermometer
- Tongs (handy for flipping ingredients on the grill)
- Grill or grill pan
- Blender

A brine adds moistness to this grilled chicken recipe, courtesy of Mulberry Tavern.

4

SAVOR



### SAVOR



**PINCH OF WISDOM** 

Don't discard the liquid from your pickled vegetables like beets, onions, green beans or cucumbers. You can use it to make a vinaigrette using one part pickling liquid and three parts extra virgin olive oil. Or try adding a splash to soups, casseroles, sauces or even bloody mary cocktails to brighten them up.

Katie Porter, chef and food programs manager at the Wallace Centers of Iowa. Visit wallace.org for details about Porter's farm-totable dinners and Pizza on the Prairie events this summer.

# ROAST CHICKEN WITH AJI AMARILLO SAUCE AND GRILLED ROMAINE SALAD

Serves 2 to 3

#### Ingredients

1 gallon of water

3/4 cup kosher salt

2/3 cup granulated sugar

Bone-in, skin-on chicken leg quarters or 1 whole chicken, spatchcocked (see chef's tips on page 40)

1/4 head of romaine, quartered through root end lengthwise

1/4 cup regular mayonnaise, such as Duke's

1/4 cup Kewpie mayonnaise (a Japanese mayo that uses only egg yolks instead of the whole egg)

1/4 cup sour cream

1/4 cup queso fresco

1 1/2 ounces Aji Amarillo (Peruvian chile paste)

2 green onions, chopped

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1 large or 2 small limes, juiced

Salt and pepper to taste

1/4 red onion, thinly sliced

Small handful of ripe tomatoes, chopped

Fresh lemon juice

Olive oil, salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. In a large pot or bucket, mix the water, sugar and salt until solids are dissolved. Submerge the chicken leg quarters or the spatchcocked chicken in the solution and refrigerate at least four hours or up to overnight.

2. Before grilling, take the chicken out of the brine and allow to come to room temperature, about 30 to 60 minutes. Pat dry.

**3.** Heat a grill or grill pan to medium high, or about 375 degrees.

**4.** Lightly brush the grates with olive oil, then place the chicken skin-side down.

5. Grill the leg quarters 20 to 30 minutes or the whole chicken for 10 to 15 minutes, or until a meat thermometer reads just below 165 degrees when inserted into the thickest part of the thigh without touching the bone. (Note: The residual cooking temperature will bring the chicken to 165 degrees after it's taken off the grill.)

**6.** Remove the chicken from the grill and allow it to rest as you make the salad.

7. Place the romaine on the grill and char slightly on all sides. Remove from the heat once grill marks appear.

8. In a blender, combine the regular and Kewpie mayonnaise, sour cream, queso fresco, Aji Amarillo, green onion and garlic. Process until smooth. (Try to do this quickly so the green onion does not discolor.)

**9.** Transfer sauce to a bowl, then add lime juice and season to taste.

**10.** Plate the grilled romaine with onion, tomato, a squeeze of lemon juice and a drizzle of olive oil. Spoon sauce on the plate, then serve with chicken on top.









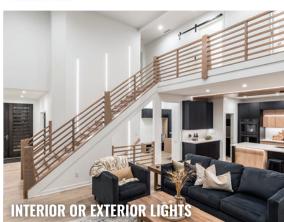
**DECORATIVE GLASS OR MIRRORS** 













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### WHAT TO TRY 5 FLAVORFUL STEAKS

If you're bored by your grilling menu, the fix might be as simple as mixing up your meats.

To "help us utilize the whole animal better," reduce food waste, and add flavor and variety to the meals of his clients at Old Station Craft Meats in Waukee, owner Nick Lenters is on a quest to expand his fans' horizons. Here are five of his favorites for this summer, plus ideas for how to best use the cut.

**Picanha:** Lean meat with a fat cap, this triangular portion of the sirloin is popular in Brazil. Lenters recommends serving it in the style of Brazilian steakhouses. Cut into strips, then snake each piece onto a skewer. Place the fat on the outside. Cook over high heat, with the fatty-side down first so it caramelizes, then rotate often to ensure even cooking.

Hanger: Since this affordable cut has a very coarse grain, marinate it for four to eight hours before grilling. Cook to your desired doneness and slice thin to use in stir-fry or tacos.

Flat Iron: "The most tender piece of beef, flat iron comes from the chuck portion of the cow," Lenters says. "It's a great option for grilling." Grill to your



liking, then "be sure to cut across the grain into thin strips," he adds, for the most succulent results. Season with Mexican spices and serve in a sizzling skillet for restaurant-quality fajitas.

Short Ribs: If you're more into smoking than grilling, consider short ribs. Similar to the osso bucco, "this cut of meat contains a bone, which adds extra flavor to the beef when slow cooked. Left uncut, the three-bone plate rib is great for smoking," Lenters says. Try it with hickory, pecan or cherry wood chips, then slice very thin and follow a recipe to use the beef in Korean-style bulgogi (a Korean barbecue).

Del Monico: For a less expensive yet great-to-grill alternative to rib-eye, try this steak. It's from the portion of the cow where the rib-eye muscle enters the chuck. "As a result, this cut contains a narrower portion of rib-eye muscle along with a portion of the chuck flap—another cut of meat that is little known, but ideal for smoking," Lenters says. Try either grilled or smoked, served with a generous pat of compound butter.

Whatever the cut, Lenters vouches for the quality of each ounce that leaves his door. "We know where the product comes from, have talked with the producer, know their story, and are familiar with their product," he says. "That's our greatest opportunity to educate people about how their food is sourced and where it comes from."

Old Station Craft Meats is located at 450 Sixth St. in Waukee; oldstationcraftmeats.com. ■

–Karla Walsh

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### **DRUMMING UP SUPPORT**

WRITER: STEVE DINNEN PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

The Isiserettes Drill and Drum Corps is a Des Moines institution. Yes, they're all about teaching young people about the music-drumming, mostly-and dancing that they love to showcase at parades and an occasional presidential inauguration. But their reach into the community goes deeper, since their true mission is to build character through developing academic and social skills.

However, the Isiserettes never had a home base. Practice days for the 68-strong corps members happened in various school gyms or outdoors on unused soccer fields. Did they need a home? Well, that subject came up during a 2018 meeting between Cory Williams, who runs the Isiserettes (and is the son of Pam Williams, one of its co-founders), and Des Moines businessman and philanthropist Harry Bookey.

"He was elated" by the Isiserettes, says Williams. "He said, 'I'm in. I'm all in.'"

In short order, Harry and his wife, Pamela Bass Bookey, came up with the entire down payment for a building at 2124 Grand Ave. that the Isiserettes had been eyeing as a headquarters. (It had an open space large enough to accommodate practices.)

In addition to funding, the Bookeys also have given time and talent to the Isiserettes. They launched a letterwriting effort to encourage other philanthropists and companies to join in what has become the first-ever capital campaign, still ongoing, for the group. Initial results were impressive, with Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield kicking in \$100,000 to the cause.

Williams says the downtown Des Moines offices for BH Companies Inc., where Harry is president, more or less turned into a campaign headquarters for the Isiserettes when it launched the campaign. Employees assisted with crafting letters and mailings. (BH Companies is one of the nation's largest owners and managers of apartments.)

The Bookeys, Williams says, are "great persons to have on your side."

Over the years they have been benefactors small and large—often large—to Des Moines Community Playhouse, Des Moines Metro Opera, Drake University, and the Harkin Institute on Drake's campus, among others. In the latest available tax return filed on their charitable foundation, the list of beneficiaries runs 20 pages, from hundreds of dollars each to tens of thousands. It's an eclectic list that includes human rights organizations, education, arts, sciences and religious groups.

How did their philanthropy become so varied?

"We read a lot," Bass Bookey says with a laugh, downplaying any credit for a lifelong commitment the couple has had in bettering Des Moines. They stay informed about the community and count on word of mouth from friends who might talk up a willing cause. And they get ideas from their three adult daughters, all of whom live out of state.

In some cases, their donations have gone beyond funding operations to altering an organization's direction. For example, they paved the way for a new headquarters and rehearsal facility for the Des Moines Symphony when they saved the building at 10th and Locust streets from the wrecking ball and transformed it into the Temple for Performing Arts.

The reasons behind their philanthropy are as varied as the causes. The Bookeys aren't trained in music but they enjoy it and believe it's an important part of a vibrant community. They support political causes because they're interested in politics. They fund gender and immigrant rights studies at the University of California because they believe it's the right thing to do. They support housing and food security because they're in the housing business, and food security is a companion to shelter security.

In short, says Bass Bookey, the world is a big place and they "are trying to connect the dots." Pamela Bass Bookey

# "THE BOOKEYS ARE GREAT PERSONS TO HAVE ON YOUR SIDE."

CORY WILLIAMS



### **HANDS-ON HARVEST**

WRITER: RACHEL VOGEL QUINN

When volunteers started helping him plant and pick produce, Tracy Blackmer was confused by their gratitude. Their efforts helped get fresh fruit and vegetables into the hands of hungry Central Iowans, but they thanked *him* for the opportunity to serve.

"There's a lot of people wanting to do something, but it's hard for them to plan and organize," Blackmer says. "We make it really simple. All you have to do is show up."

Blackmer, 53, founded the nonprofit Iowa Gardening Good in 2013. Last year, the project grew 150,000 pounds of fresh produce on his family's 20-acre farm outside Madrid. All of it was donated to food pantries in the Greater Des Moines area.

With a doctorate in agronomy and a background working in agricultural and water research, Blackmer is an expert at growing food efficiently. Funded by grants and private donations, lowa Gardening for Good grows fresh produce for 17 to 18 cents a pound, significantly cheaper than food banks can purchase wholesale.

"There's no reason we shouldn't have plenty of fresh produce in Iowa, as easy as it is to grow here," Blackmer says.

Blackmer and his wife, Doreen, 54, returned to their home state 15 years ago to raise two daughters, now students at Iowa State University. A registered dietitian with a master's in animal science, Doreen puts a lot of



labor into the farm. But Iowa Gardening for Good is her husband's passion project. In 2016, he quit his full-time job to focus on running the nonprofit.

In their first years on the farm, the family grew pumpkins to sell to local grocery stores, as well as fresh vegetables for their dinner table. Blackmer's mother told him the food pantry where she volunteered would take their extras. The surplus ended up stocking several food pantries, and Blackmer asked the Food Bank of Iowa to take the rest.

When he discovered that most pantries lack fresh produce, he ramped up production, collaborating with the pantries to determine what clients wanted. The list now includes watermelons, butternut squash, zucchini, cucumbers, cantaloupe, carrots, cabbage, sweet corn and peppers.

The Food Bank of Iowa and the Des Moines Area Religious Council helped Blackmer find volunteers and distributed the produce to pantries in their networks. During the pandemic, however, Blackmer started making twice-weekly deliveries directly to the pantries. Once, he saw 1,500 pounds of his watermelon disappear in less than a day.

"You can see how people just flocked to it," he says. "That's a pretty powerful thing."

Blackmer says Iowa Gardening for Good has three purposes: feed foodinsecure Iowans, provide fulfilling service work, and teach people where food comes from. In a typical year, 1,500 people volunteer.

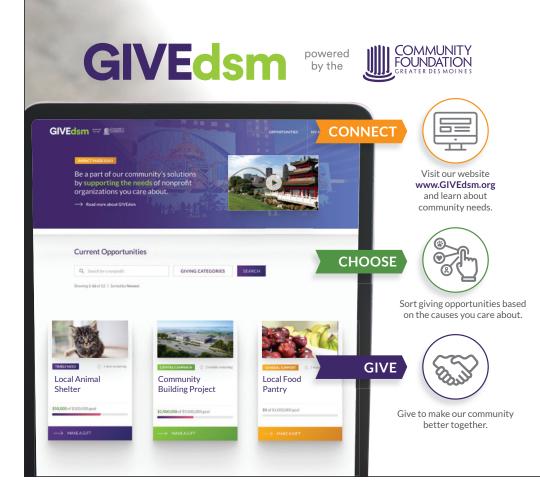
"If their back is hurting a little because they worked so much and their hands are dirty, they feel like they achieved more," Blackmer says.

In the summer of 2020, Jeff Austin brought his wife and four daughters, ages 9 to 16, to volunteer every other week. "It gives you perspective to know where that food is going, to realize that there are people in our community who need the help," Austin says. "It's the satisfaction of being able to do something behind the scenes that will go toward good works here in our community."

Blackmer says the volunteers have shown him the concept of "lowa nice" in action. "This is a service project, but I think it's a lot more than that," he says. "I have seen so much more good in people."

Iowa Stops Hunger is a Business Publications Corporation initiative to raise awareness of hunger in Iowa and inspire action to combat it.





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# INDIGO MOORE

Profession: Artist and entrepreneur Age: 28

# How would you describe your style?

I love clothes—wearing a vibe is everything! But it's the accessories for me—my rings, earrings, glasses, necklaces, etc. My accessories complete whatever I wear, even sweats and a hoodie. Style icons: I didn't really have an icon growing up, until about high school [when] I started obsessing over an artist named Tragik, who is based in California. It wasn't until college I started appreciating different art styles such as contemporary art, Renaissance and realism.

Talk about your art style: I love to try different techniques. I'm currently into oil painting, but I also do graphite/charcoal, acrylic and digital art. It's only been in the past year or two my style has represented Black women and a reflection of selflove. I'm known for my portraits. And your tats? My tattoo is still in the works but it represents the left side of the brain (logic, science, numbers). The chemical icon on my forearm is serotonin. And eventually my right arm will represent the right side of the brain (creativity).

PHOTOGRAPHER: JOELLE BLANCHARD





ASHLEY AND FREDERICK GARRIN

> Ashley and Frederick Garrin renewed their vows with friends and family (including children Maizy, 10; Monroe, 7; and Moses, 5) at the Conservatory downtown, then enjoyed an after party at the AC Hotel. "It was exciting to marry my best friend all over again, surrounded by the people we love, especially our children," says Ashley, assistant director of Iowa State University's McNair Program.

> "We always knew when we got to 10 years we would do something big," she adds, noting that she and Frederick who works as a manager for Edwards Lifesciences—were originally married by a justice of the peace in Ames.

Vow renewal date: Oct. 3, 2020

Photographer: Keesha Ward, Ward Creative Studios



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To register for the certification programs and find additional resources, visit DSMpartnership.com/inclusion.

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**GOLD: INCLUSION CHAMPION** 





# KITCHENS TO CRAVE

THESE THREE LOCAL KITCHENS FEATURE THE LATEST DESIGN TRENDS IN TILE, CABINETRY, STORAGE AND LAYOUT. START DREAMING UP A NEW SPACE TO SUIT YOUR STYLE.

WRITER: BETH ESLINGER



HOTOGRAPHER: KELSEY SUTTON

A 10-foot island serves as the central family hangout in this Polk City kitchen. Turn the page to learn more about the space.

All these kitchens were entries in dsm's inaugural Home Design Awards, revealed March 9. To see additional projects—including some dreamy outdoor spaces just in time for summer—visit dsmhomedesignawards.com. We're also covering the spaces in our free weekly newsletter, dsmWeekly. Subscribe through our website, dsmmagazine.com.

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### FARMHOUSE FASHIONABLE

New construction has advantages, specifically when it comes to customization. In the case of this Polk City home by Black Birch Design and Build, the kitchen meets the needs of the young family with three boys and two dogs.

The kitchen forms the centerpiece of the open plan, with an oversize island that fits the entire family for daily meals and for entertaining friends. Throughout, light floors and use of white create consistency, says Jill Rolling of Black Birch. For contrast, the designers used a mix of cabinetry, black-trimmed windows and metal finishes. "I love the effortless look of mixing metals," Rolling says. "For anyone nervous to try, I always recommend sticking with two. I mixed brushed nickel, black and warm brass."

Perhaps the surprise in the home is the masculine coffee station (or "back kitchen") tucked behind the primary space. It houses a majority of food storage, although cabinetry is ample throughout.

### TIPS

Painted off-white cabinets, a dark charcoal in the pantry, and the lightstained white oak island and hutch pieces set a casual modern farmhouse look in this Polk City home. The countertops are a honed quartzite. C.E.

"I love a neutral home," says Jill Rolling of Black Birch Design and Build. "Warm whites, wood tones with pops of black accents repeat throughout."

### TIPS

"Black is bold, but also elegant and refined," says architect Anna Squier. "Balance the black with some bright elements. In our case, lots of white." to line

The design team originally wanted to use a dark grout to hide wear and tear. Squier suggests a lighter grout if using concrete tiles, as black can stain. \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

### TILE STYLE

Located in a 1908 Woodland Heights home, this renovated kitchen is a perfect juxtaposition of modern and classic, new and old. The renovation focused on opening up the space, which was dark and cramped, says architect Anna Squier of Modern Studio, who worked with MBG Renovation on the project.

"By creating a modern space, we hoped to respect the historic elements of the home, rather than compete with them," she says of the 193-square-foot space.

The centerpiece is the tile used on the floor and behind the cooktop. From Clé, the cement floor tiles are applied randomly, looking like an art installation. Sleek black tile backs the cooktop.

To create a modern galley layout, Squier used white Shaker-style cabinetry, which contrasts with the black trim on the new window and doors. The walnut butcher-block countertops complement the home's intricate oak woodwork.

"Knowing that we wanted to go bold with the floors, we kept the remainder of the space white, bright and neutral," Squier says. "The tile design influenced the rest of the space."





### CONTRAST AND CHARACTER

High-end details and a mix of materials create modern sophistication in this Ankeny kitchen by Kimberley Development.

With the dining room to the side and the living area opposite the island, the open space has an easy flow for entertaining, cooking or just relaxing.

Stained wood with a chrome U-channel contributes furniture-like detail to the range hood and island; the design motif repeats elsewhere in the home. The cherry finish also clads a built-in wine cooler, which the homeowner appreciates for entertaining or relaxing while making dinner.

Lighting is a hallmark of Kimberley's designs, as are separate pantries. "Walk-in pantries are a must as far as I am concerned for a chef's kitchen," Kimberley says. "This allows you to easily see all of your food ... without taking up your cabinet space."



### TIPS

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The waterfall island is wrapped in quartz, which developer Bill Kimberley prefers for its durability—it's hard, dense and doesn't absorb food, stains or bacteria.

The linear range hood repeats the cabinetry hardware. Pendants complement the task lighting, keeping the space bright even at night. Kimberley suggests putting all fixtures on dimmers for flexibility.







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Shrub roses dot Bob and Becky Shaw's garden, which is once again sunny after they removed a number of mature trees. This beauty is "Folksinger," a Griffith Buck rose bred in Iowa.

Left: Twelve years after they created the garden, the Shaws reimagined their landscape and installed a 5,000-gallon water feature that meanders through much of the property.

# EVOLUTION OF CONTROL O

FOR THE PAST THREE DECADES, BOB AND BECKY SHAW HAVE NURTURED THEIR CLIVE GARDEN AS IT HAS GROWN AND CHANGED.

WRITER: VERONICA LORSON FOWLER PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY n an era where HGTV makes a garden seem like something to be crashed and created in a weekend, Bob and Becky Shaw know better.

They've been tending their half-acre in Clive for nearly 30 years. Over time, they've guided their landscape through numerous phases, adjusting paths, decks and patios as their lifestyle changes; planting trees and cutting them down;

and experimenting with plants that sometimes thrive, sometimes fail.

In 1991, the Shaws were living on a much smaller plot of land in West Des Moines. They had caught the gardening bug and were looking for more space to indulge their passion. "We came to increasingly enjoy our shared flower gardening experiences," Bob says. "Time spent in the garden provided a creative outlet and decompression [from the] demands of our careers." Both are doctors—Bob, now retired, worked in neonatology at Blank Children's Hospital, and Becky, an obstetrician-gynecologist, teaches at Des Moines University.

They found a lot in Clive, a new build, and purchased the empty lot next door to have plenty of gardening space. It "brought an opportunity to literally shape the landscape," Bob says.

The Shaws started with bare clay, since the topsoil had been removed during the subdivision's development. Under the supervision of Ted Lare Design Build, the soil was amended and improved with 43 truckloads of topsoil. It was then reshaped with two large berms and an elevated perimeter, which adds variety to the otherwise flat land. Five-foot wrought-iron fencing, supported with brick columns, further defined the borders and provided even more privacy. The perimeter was also extensively planted with a mix of some 70 trees, as well as a number of shrubs.

Cut limestone and granite boulders were used to line the perimeter and create edging for the berms. The entire property was planted in a mix of shrubs, ornamental grasses, perennials and annuals for color and texture.

Continues on page 78

1. An open-air pavilion anchors the east edge of the property; it's the perfect spot for enjoying a sunrise. The brick columns and shake shingles match the house. The Shaws love to entertain, so during the pandemic, the pavilion enabled them to host a few socially distanced gatherings with masks.

2. In 1991, the garden started out with full sun. But as trees grew, the Shaws planted more shade-loving plants, like this ghost fern.

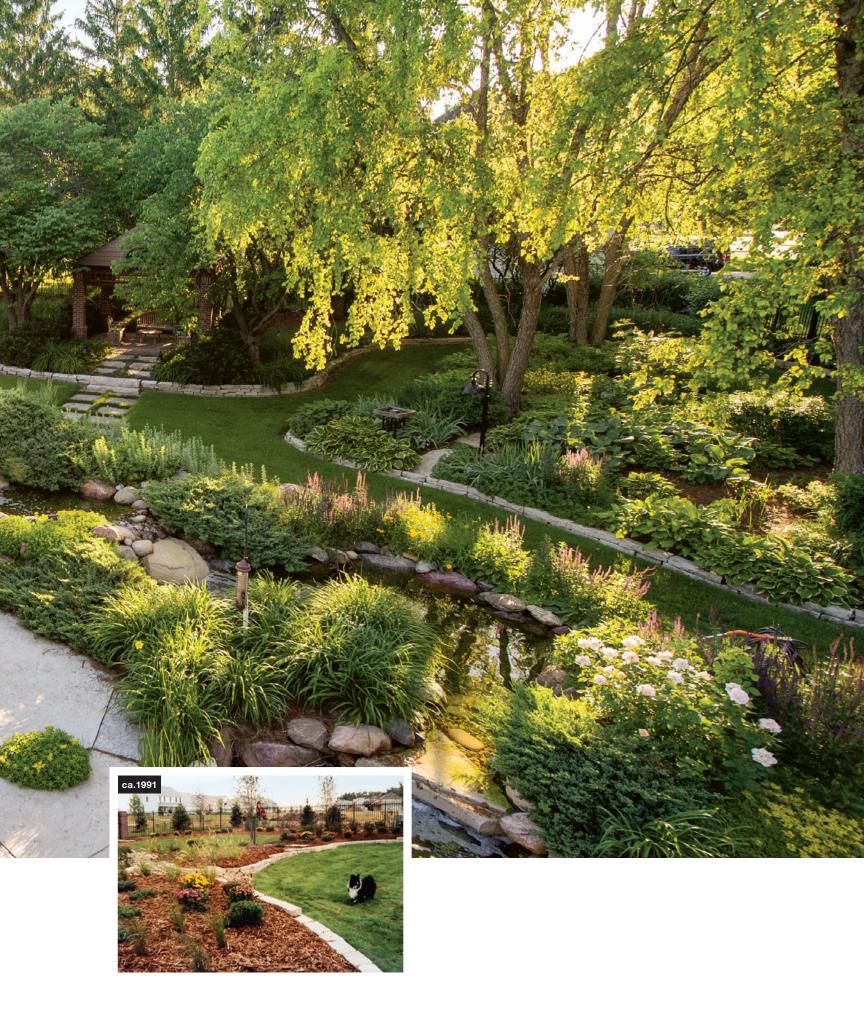
**3.** The water garden is extensive, undulating through about a quarter of the property. Granite boulders artfully arranged throughout create elevation contrast.

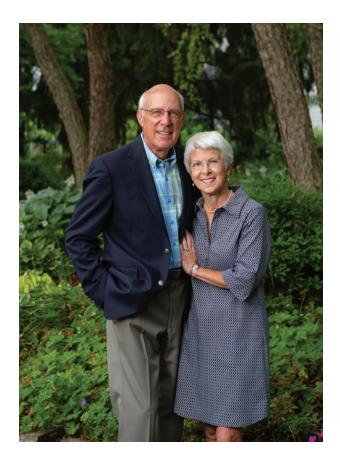
4. In 2003, the Shaws installed a network of paths and small stone patios with limestone slabs, accented with pots and seating. Here, spires of deep purple perennial salvia play off the bright red and pale pink shrub roses.





Over the past 30 years, the garden has changed immensely, going from plenty of sun to plenty of shade. Now it's primarily sunny once again. In 2003, the Shaws removed a pergola to make way for the large limestone slab patio and the water feature flowing throughout the property. Ground-level and underwater lighting extends the hours of enjoyment well into summer nights.





### Continued from page 74

Even during the winter, the evergreens and ornamental grasses add interest and are beautiful with a dusting of snow, Bob says.

They named the place Shetland Run, which reflects their ancestry as well as their beloved Shetland sheepdogs (a total of five over the years), who have had the run of the garden.

By 2000, the Shaws had a mature landscape on their hands. The trees that brought privacy weren't just keeping out prying eyes—they were blocking sunlight, too. "Increasingly, it became a challenge to grow all those colorful annuals, which need full sun," Bob says. And some of the crab apple trees were developing chronic fungal Bob Shaw is a retired doctor, a master gardener and an active community volunteer. Becky is also a physician and teaches at Des Moines University. She loves arranging flowers.

infections, causing them to drop leaves and become unsightly.

So in 2003 the Shaws made the tough call to remove a number of trees. While they were at it, they decided to also remove the pergola in the back to better accommodate an ambitious water feature.

Once again, the land was shaped—this time with large Wisconsin granite boulders to create the necessary elevation change for a 5,000-gallon water feature with three pumps. Two small decks were enlarged, and slabs of lowa limestone were brought in to create a large patio and smaller pathways.

Bob retired the same year they installed the water feature, giving him more time to tend the garden. He also was able to go through master gardener training, which he'd wanted to do for years. That led to the garden being on the 2005 local master gardener tour, making the Shaws realize how much the larger public enjoyed their space.

That means that the garden, while remaining a private sanctuary for the couple, also evolved once more into a beautiful location for fundraising events for local nonprofits.

"The Shaws are a work in progress, so their garden needs to be as well," says Bob, reflecting on the many changes in their landscape. "It's a never-ending adventure."



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# A Perfect Blend

Ballet Des Moines and Winefest partner for a creative photo project to raise awareness of both organizations.

PHOTOGRAPHER: JAMI MILNE HAIR AND MAKEUP: HAIRBYBRIANNE.COM

> o Jami Milne, ballet and wine have more in common than they might seem. Specifically, both "can have an air of inaccessibility," says Milne, creative director of Ballet Des Moines and a longtime *dsm* contributing photographer. "People

may think of either one, 'it's not for me' because they feel they don't know enough about the art form to attend a ballet performance or to buy the 'right' wine."

Milne's desire to challenge that perception led her to develop this photo project. "I wanted to help create awareness and promote the accessibility of both art forms," she says.

She teamed up with Natasha Sayles, executive director of Winefest Des Moines, who chose the wine that Milne then sought to express through photographing the dancers. Sayles selected a Champagne, a sauvignon blanc, a rosé, a red, and a blend; see page 86 for a description of each. The project builds on an earlier collaboration between the two organizations, which last fall and winter presented virtual wine dinners that included ballet performances. "Every organization has had to determine how to keep engaging patrons and audiences and how to keep creating together, safely and innovatively," Milne says. She adds that after the success of the virtual dinners, she approached Sayles to consider ideas of "collaborating to bring wine and ballet to Des Moines in a fresh way."

As Milne imagined the photos, she sought to capture "what the wine might feel like through how the dancers pose and express themselves," she says. "The concept was never meant to be literal. I didn't want to shoot a dancer holding a glass; rather, I wanted them to embody the spirit of the wine."

As performers onstage, dancers are often asked to look alike and move in synch, Milne adds. But in planning this project, she says, "I wanted to draw upon who they are as individuals." -*Christine Riccelli* 

### Amelia Grubb DOMAINE RUINART BLANC DE BLANCS

Grubb's evocation of Champagne "reminds me of the celebratory act of opening a bottle with the cork popping," Milne says. "With her open arms and naturally curly and tousled hair, Amelia just seems to embody the sweet release in the feeling of 'we made it.' "

### Bobbie Lynn Kandravi CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC

"I know a lot of strong women who drink sauvignon blanc," Milne says. When Kandravi, dressed in white, sat in the chair and stretched out her leg, she conveyed that strength, plus the crispness, sophistication and cleanness of the wine, Milne says. "White wine is sometimes seen as less sophisticated than red, but I think this image proves otherwise," she says. "I want what she's having."

### Renee Castonguay GONC WINERY ROSÉ CUVÉE ANNA

As one of Ballet Des Moines' youngest dancers, Castonguay seemed the perfect fit for this fresh, fruity Slovenian rosé, Milne says: "There's such a soft, beautiful, inviting look to her." In shooting the photo, Milne asked Castonguay to "imagine sipping this wine at a streetside Paris cafe in the afternoon, feeling fun and flirty yet the sophisticated ballerina I know you to be."

### Logan Hillman PENFOLDS GRANGE

When Hillman took off his shirt and grabbed a nearby guitar, the move expressed the boldness of this shiraz. To Milne, the athletic position conveys "a way of celebrating out loud. I like the twist of showing a dancer in an unexpected way."

### Serkan Usta and Lori Grooters SEAN MINOR NICOLE MARIE SIGNATURE

Usta, the company's artistic director, and Grooters, associate artistic director, run the company together. As blends derive their flavor and strength from the combination of grapes, the married couple "balance each other out" in terms of their skills, artistry and personalities, Milne says, and "continue to draw on each other's strengths" in moving the company forward. Another reason the two seemed especially appropriate to represent this particular blend: It's made by married winemakers who bonded over wine similarly to how Usta and Grooters bonded over ballet.



DOMAINE RUINART BLANC DE BLANCS

Inspired by the intuition of a monk well ahead of his time, the House of Ruinart in 1729 was the first established Champagne House. The aroma of this Champagne has ripe citrus fruit notes, but the palate is rounded and supple. In addition, "it has a persistent release of bubbles that illuminate its beauty," according to the winemaker.



 CLIFF LEDE

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 SAUVIGNON BLANC

Produced in Napa Valley, this 2019 sauvignon blanc is described as elegant and lively, with an aroma of ambrosial lemon curd, elderflower, Bosc pear flesh and apricots. The fruit underwent the whole-cluster pressing process, which releases the delicate juices from the clusters and creates a deep level of complexity and sophistication.



### GONC WINERY ROSÉ CUVÉE ANNA

The style of this Slovenian rosé is French provincial but has the cool mineral snap for which the central European country is known. The wine offers an aroma of wild berries. strawberries, melons and peaches. On the palate, it's bright and fruity with a refreshing finish. Fifty percent of the rosé is made from Zametna Crnina, which, dating back 400 years, is claimed to be the world's oldest living vine.



### PENFOLDS GRANGE

Officially listed as a Heritage Icon of South Australia, Grange is one of that country's most celebrated wines. Made with fully ripe, intensely flavored shiraz grapes, the red wine is "sophisticated and sculptured-a dynamic oscillation between muscularity/ solidity and polish/ sleekness," according to the winemaker.



### SEAN MINOR NICOLE MARIE SIGNATURE

Husband-and-wife duo Sean and Nicole Minor set out to make approachable, everyday wines. The Nicole Marie Signature is a blend of merlot, zinfandel and petite sirah. With aromas of cassis and vanilla, it has flavors of blueberries and dark cherry combined with hints of oak spice, soft tannins and sweet oak.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR WINEFEST AND BALLET DES MOINES

As of press time, Winefest Des Moines was planning to host smaller, in-person events June 1–12 as well as offer take-home kits for a few events. Some of the larger in-person events, such as Sips and the City and the Grand Tasting (and possibly others), are being moved to the fall, according to Executive Director Natasha Sayles. Also at press time, Ballet Des Moines was in the process of planning spring and summer outdoor performances. For updates and details, visit each organization's website: winefestdesmoines.com; balletdesmoines.org. Helping you through all of life's transitions, big or small DES

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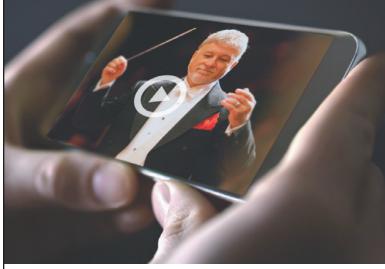




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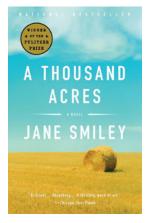
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FOR ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2022, DES MOINES METRO OPERA WILL STAGE A \$1 MILLION PRODUCTION OF THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVEL "A THOUSAND ACRES." THE NEWLY COMMISSIONED WORK PROMISES TO DRAW THE COMPANY INTO THE INTERNATIONAL LIMELIGHT.

WRITER: CHRISTINE RICCELLI PHOTOGRAPHER: AMEE ELLIS





About four years ago, as Michael Egel started pondering Des Moines Metro Opera's 2022 50th anniversary, he knew he wanted to do something challenging and complicated.

Something big and bold. Something that would move the company from "participating in the future of opera to helping create it."

The result? DMMO has commissioned a \$1 million production of "A Thousand Acres," based on the 1991 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Jane Smiley. The opera will premiere July 9, 2022, at Blank Performing Arts Center in Indianola.

The story is a perfect fit for an opera as it reimagines Shakespeare's "King Lear," a tragedy in which the king relinquishes his power and land to two of his three daughters and ends up destitute and insane. In Smiley's reinterpretation, the setting is rural lowa in the 1980s, and the story is told from the perspective of the oldest daughter, Ginny.

As an lowa-based opera company, "we wanted to find a story that felt intrinsic to lowa and was uniquely ours to tell," says Egel, who has been DMMO's artistic and general director since 2013. "But we also wanted a novel that had achieved a profile beyond our borders. While this is an lowa tale, it's also a universal one."

That universality, Egel believes, could draw the interest of opera companies around the world. "Our goal is to

contribute something to the wider operatic world, adding our voice to the international repertory by setting a distinctly American and Iowa-based story to music," he says.

### **VISION AND INNOVATION**

Major commissions like this are typically undertaken only by large companies that have the resources they require (think New York City's Metropolitan Opera). But over the years, DMMO has built a reputation for punching beyond its weight, building strong patron and donor loyalty along the way. Egel has led the company with vision and innovation, developing new audiences and connecting with the community through progressive programming that defies traditional stereotypes. "A Thousand Acres" promises to draw DMMO into the international limelight.

"People like Michael have cultivated interest in local audiences for new works," says Mark Campbell, a Pulitzer Prize-winning librettist who wrote the text for "A Thousand Acres." "American culture has started to see that opera isn't what we grew up with—it's not elitist and it's not just for the rich. It's not just old European operas."

Typically, he adds, "audiences are terrified of new operas. It's up to the general director to connect with them and help them [embrace] new works. Michael has done a brilliant job doing that."

But it takes more than just an interest in new works to commission one. It also takes money. To that end, local philanthropists Tom and Linda Koehn earlier this year provided a major boost to the production's funding with



As part of the "A Thousand Acres" project, Des Moines Metro Opera asked Des Moines-based photographer Amee Ellis to shoot rural Iowa landscapes in all four seasons. Ellis specializes in landscapes, seeking to explore the interconnectedness of spirit and place. "Landscape is more than a pastoral scene," she says in her artist's statement. "It is an expression, a way of contemplating the relationship between what has come before us and the fraction of time that is the present moment." Ellis shoots with film and manual cameras, then processes the images by hand in her darkroom. She studied fine art photography at Columbia College Chicago and has displayed her work in a number of juried exhibitions, including the Des Moines Arts Festival.



a leadership gift of \$1.5 million. Of that, \$500,000 is being allocated to "A Thousand Acres," with the remaining going to DMMO's endowment fund.

### THE 'RIGHT STORY'

Once Egel knew he wanted to commission a major work for the 50th anniversary, he turned to artists and community members for ideas. Both Linda Koehn and acclaimed stage director Kristine McIntyre suggested "A Thousand Acres," almost simultaneously, Egel says. The Portland, Oregonbased McIntyre has directed more than 100 operas across the United States, including numerous ones for DMMO, such as "Billy Budd" and "Dead Man Walking." She'll also direct "A Thousand Acres."

"I immediately knew it was the right story," Egel says. The book "is perfectly placed in history; it's modern enough that we know these characters and their stories, but enough time has passed since its publication that we have some perspective on its impact.

"The retelling of 'King Lear' against an Iowa backdrop is the perfect meld of subject matter and location," he adds, as the story deals with the perils of property ownership, gender roles, patriarchy, legacy and "the family forces at play in rural society. ... It's a family drama writ large."

To capture that drama in an operatic form, librettist Campbell had to turn a dense 400-page novel into a singable text. Based in New York City, Campbell has written 28 librettos as well as the lyrics for seven musicals; his works have been performed in more than 60 venues around the world. He won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in music for the opera "Silent Night."

In creating the libretto for "A Thousand Acres," he says he started by "looking for the heart of the story. And to me, the heart is Ginny," the book's narrator.

Campbell says it was critical to honor Smiley's vision of the story and was pleased when she approved the libretto. Still, given the novel's dark theme, "I asked myself where I could find some hope in the story. What's a positive message I can give the audience?" he says. "I think that's an important part of telling a story: leaving an audience with some sense of a way out of the situation."

So he injected "some hope and some humor. If it's all despair and dystopia, the audience turns away. I want them to care about the characters and stay with the story."

### **MUSIC COMPOSITION**

Once Campbell finished the libretto, he sent it to the composer, Kristin Kuster, chair of composition at the University of Michigan School of Music, who's currently writing the music. Although female composers have made strides in the opera world in recent years, men still dominate the field. Asking a woman to compose

Continues on page 96



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Platée by Jean-Phillippe Rameau is a comic opera centering on a water nymph who believes the king of gods is in love with her. The opera was first performed at a royal wedding at Versailles.

### 2021 SUMMER SEASON

As of press time in March, Des Moines Metro Opera was planning to return to in-person performances for its 2021 Summer Festival season. Still, Michael Egel, DMMO's general and artistic director, notes the company is monitoring the pandemic's trajectory and progress in vaccinations in order to ensure the safety of audiences and performers. Thus, the company is reviewing such options as limited capacity and a hybrid schedule of indoor and outdoor performances.

"We're being as flexible and nimble as we can ... [but] we're confident we'll be able to perform this summer in some capacity," Egel says. "We have bold and innovative plans to return to stage."

DMMO will present the four shows it had planned to stage in 2020, before the pandemic forced the company to pivot to a virtual season, which consisted of online and televised presentations of some the company's most well-received recent productions, including "Billy Budd" and "Rusalka." The shows reached audiences around the world, Egel says, garnering 270,000 interactions on social media and YouTube. The 2021 season's mainstage shows will be performed on a rotating basis July 2–24; as of press time, the venue was expected to be Blank Performing Arts Center in Indianola.

"Sweeney Todd: The Demon of Barber

**Street"** by Stephen Sondheim, a musical thriller exploring the dangers of revenge that, DMMO promises, "will leave spines tingling long after its dramatic conclusion." July 2, 4, 9, 17, 22, 15.

"The Queen of Spades" by Tchaikovsky, a Russian ghost story about obsession and psychosis set in the late 18th century. July 3, 11, 13, 16, 24.

"Platée," a fable written in 1745 that involves an assortment of curious characters, including the titular character who is a marsh-nymph, a Greek king, and Greek gods such as Thalie (the god of comedy). July 10, 18, 23.

DMMO also will present **"Fellow Travelers"** July 17 at Hoyt Sherman Place. The story focuses on the littleknown "lavender scare" of the 1950s, which resulted in mass firings of gay people, and those believed to be gay, from the U.S. government.

For tickets and to keep updated on DMMO's plans for the season, visit the company's website, dmmo.org.



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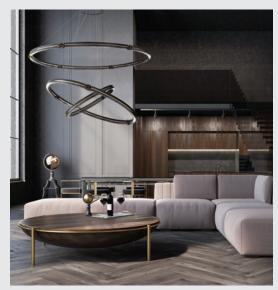
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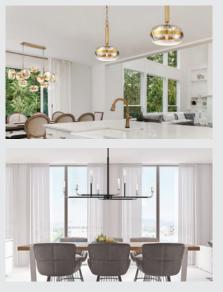
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### Continued from page 92

"A Thousand Acres" was "a no-brainer," Egel says, as the story is told from a female point of view and the book was written by a woman. Another goal was to hire a composer who understood the Midwestern landscape.

As she writes the music, Kuster says she is "parsing through the complexities of the story [in which] people are very connected in some ways but also very disconnected." She adds that she's navigating how to balance the story's dark and brooding aspects with some lightness and levity.

Kuster says she hopes audiences "hear the music as both the foundation of and the wallpaper around the story. Part of my job is to support and enhance all of the emotions that are happening."

Those emotions are also at the center of how director McIntyre plans to stage the opera, including the choreography, set design and costumes. "The story is less about cornfields and soybeans and more about the psychological landscape of the characters, especially Ginny," she says. "I love the challenge of indicating a really big setting—the landscape—but focusing intently on the emotional lives of the characters."

McIntyre, Kuster and Campbell all say they love collaborating and creating an opera for the modern era, based on a blockbuster novel by a living writer. (Smiley, who now lives in California, was a professor of English at Iowa State for 15 years and received an M.A., an M.F.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.)

Egel also loves imagining what it will be like to look back on the project, once it has been performed not only by DMMO but by opera companies throughout the U.S. and abroad.

"With any luck, we will have created the next 'Carmen' or 'Magic Flute,' " he says. "One day we'll look back and say, 'We did that. We made that here.' "



# dsm: LIFTING THE VEIL

# 2021: LIFE TRANSFORMED

In 2021, our Lifting the Veil theme will be Life Transformed. Through five remaining events and our annual publication, we will explore how the lives and mental health of Iowa families have been indelibly changed by the pandemic, economic disruption, heightened focus on racial equity, and political turmoil of the last 12 months.

### PARENTING YOUR PARENTS

### THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2021 | 12-1 P.M.

Over the last year, many adult children have been caring for elderly parents from afar due to COVID-19 distancing guidelines. This session, aimed at an audience of adult children, their parents and providers, will focus on the mental health ramifications for both parties, and what you can do to take care of your own mental health if you are caring for your parents.

### YOUNG ADULTS IN LIMBO

## THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2021 | 12-1 P.M.

Young adults in their late teens and twenties have found their lives deeply disrupted during the last year. Young adults, their parents, employers and providers will benefit from this session's frank conversation that will lay out the facts, provide information about how to recognize and treat mental health issues, and offer where to turn for support.

### **TEENS AT RISK**

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 | 12-1 P.M.

Over the last year, teens' lives have been transformed by the pandemic, heightened conversations about racial equity, and the political landscape. This discussion, aimed at parents of teens, providers and those who care about our adolescent population, will focus on data, disparities, and advice from experts on the front line who can help you identify warning signs and develop healthy tools to support your teen.

### SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21,

2021 | 12-1 P.M. During the pandemic, our youngest citizens have experienced unprecedented levels of turmoil - a social, emotional and academic ordeal so great that many experts are predicting long-term developmental and mental health ramifications. This session, aimed at parents, grandparents, employers who want to support working parents with young children, and providers, will focus on data, disparities and how to help families cope and thrive.

### CARING FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR OUR KIDS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER

18, 2021 | 12-1 P.M. Teachers, child care providers, and mental health and health care workers have been unduly affected by the repercussions of the pandemic. This program, aimed at parents and at those who care for kids across a wide variety of professions, will focus on the effect of the pandemic on teachers, child care professionals and health care workers.





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### TRAVEL



Right: Fromagination Cheese is one of the top cheese shops in the country. You can grab a free sample of any of their offerings. The shop also stocks other locally made products such as honey, chocolates and preserves.

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# 36 HOURS IN MADISON

WITH THREE LAKES, HUNDREDS OF MILES OF BIKE TRAILS AND 270 CITY PARKS, IT'S EASY TO EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS IN WISCONSIN'S STATE CAPITAL.

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WRITER: JANE BURNS

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# WELL, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.

After a decade living 20 miles from Madison, tired of the commute and eager to get back into the rhythm of a city and all it offered, I moved back there in late 2019. Without late-night drives, my life would surely be filled with even more concerts, ballgames and nights out with friends.

Like I said, it seemed like a good idea. Then a few months later ... well, we all know what happened.

Every reason why I'd moved to Madison was taken away, leaving me with just one option: Become a tourist in my own city and explore what I hadn't planned to explore. And that exploring would have to happen outdoors because so much was shut down. That didn't just mean outdoors in an REI sort of way; in many ways it's simply the opposite of indoors.

Fortunately, Madison is a city built for anyone who wants to be outdoors, pandemic or not. With three lakes, hundreds of miles of bike trails and 270 city parks, it's easy to build a day when the only time spent indoors is bedtime. That's just what I did—on a bike, on foot, lunch or coffee dates in a newly discovered park, or wandering around chasing sunrises and sunsets. Among friends, it all raised the question: Why haven't we always lived like this?

The landscape has been Madison's pull since the beginning, particularly the piece of land downtown between lakes Mendota and Monona. The city's hallmark geographical feature ensures that every Madisonian knows what an "isthmus" is and might even be able to spell it.

Even before Wisconsin became a territory in 1836, a man named James Doty had traveled to that isthmus and, so enamored of the view, bought 1,200 unsettled acres that

included it. He was a judge and a land speculator, a dodgy combination, and persuaded the territorial legislature to place the capital there. Doty cashed in but also had the right vision: Even now (or at least when it opens to the public), you can stand in the middle of the Capitol rotunda and see both lakes on either side of you.

The Capitol building is the heart of Madison, and from it extends State Street, the longtime pedestrian-friendly shopping and drinking/dining area that leads to the University of Wisconsin. In recent years, however, the other side of the Capitol—known as the East Washington corridor—has seen a transformation not unlike that of the East Village in Des Moines. Warehouses and worn-out buildings on a busy street have been turned into spots for dining, nightlife, music and sports.

Areas just east and west of downtown have plenty to offer, too. The near-east Williamson (Willy to the locals) and East Johnson street areas are walkable neighborhoods with unique shops, bars and restaurants. Just west of downtown, Monroe Street begins at Camp Randall Stadium, home to the Wisconsin Badgers, and heads to two commercial areas as well as to lake access and beautiful walking areas.

Madison's geography makes the city a driving challenge, but it's easy to explore by bike. Madison is one of five cities awarded the League of American Bicyclists' top designation as a bike-friendly city, and the city's BCycle rent/share program offers easy-riding e-bikes. Many are docked in neighborhoods with trail or lake access.

It's handy that Madison has long embraced outdoor living; it's in Dane County, which has had the state's strictest COVID-19 regulations. Check local regulations before you visit.



Outdoor rec is part of Madison's appeal. Find bike and boat rentals for exploring the city's paths and lakes.





Left to right: AC Hotel; Tenney Park bridge is a top sunset spot; Crepe Corea with kimchi, gochujang sauce and grilled scallion at Black Locust Cafe.

### **FRIDAY EVENING**

Settle in. For a splurge, book a room at the Edgewater Hotel, a recently renovated art deco classic on the shore of Lake Mendota. The AC Hotel off Capitol Square puts you in the heart of downtown. The Marquette Hotel is an 11-room boutique hotel in the midst of the Willy Street neighborhood.

Relax along the lake. One of the most perfectly Wisconsin spots in Madison is the **Biergarten at Olbrich** Park on the city's east side. Overlooking Lake Monona, it's not just about the (local) beer and soda at the beer garden but bratwurst and cheese curds, too.

Take it to go. There's no need to cut short your lake time for dinner; you just need to find the right takeout before you hit your next destination. Try Miller Family Meat & Three for a casual, carryout way to get a dish from a James Beard Award-winning chef, Tory Miller. A traditional Friday night fish fry from Kavanaugh's Esquire Club or Dexter's Pub or some barbecue from Beef Butter BBQ also make for a fine eastside picnic supper.

Watch the sun set. Lake Mendota is a postcard-perfect setting for a sunset, and four east- and north-side parks give you a perfect view: Warner, Burrows, Tenney and James Madison.

### SATURDAY

Coffee and a kayak. In a normal world, the Saturday destination would be the Dane County Farmers' Market on Capitol Square, but, as of press time, its status for 2021 was still undecided. Instead, head south from downtown to Lakeside Street Coffee House for a light breakfast to eat inside or outside there, or at neighboring Bernie's Beach.

Directly across Monona Bay is Brittingham Boats, where you can rent canoes, kayaks, paddle boats or stand-up paddle boards. If you'd rather be by the water instead of on it, two BCycle stations are in the vicinity for a lakeside ride.

Cheese time. You're in Wisconsin, so of course you need to pick up cheese. Fromagination on Capitol Square is one of the finest cheese shops in the U.S., with a range of local favorites and other food-related items. Take some chances—you can sample anything in the cases. Grab lunch there, or head down the street to The Coopers Tavern, an Irish gastropub with outdoor seating.

Wander State Street. Neighboring Little Luxuries and Anthology offer unique gifts and goods, many locally created. The Soap Opera has been a destination for decades, while Sunshine Daydream tips its hat to Madison's hippie history as a place to pick up some tie-dye. Paul's Book Store has been in business since 1954, and its packed shelves make it a quintessential used book shop. You're in the Dairy State, so a stop at **Chocolate Shoppe** Ice Cream is required by law.

Dinner on a roof. Fresco, above the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, lives up to its name with rooftop dining overlooking State Street. Eno Vino, above the AC Hotel, has stunning views of the state Capitol from its patio. For a more steakhouse/supper club feel, try the Tornado Club Steak House just off Capitol Square. If you want to get out of downtown, head to Buraka on Willy Street for Ethiopian food and an outdoor dining area that feels like a friendly neighbor's backyard.

Neighborhood nightcap. History is on tap as well as a wide range of beer at the Malt House. The craft tavern was a former hangout for Union soldiers stationed at or headed to Camp Randall during the Civil War.

### SUNDAY

Made for outside. Even before the pandemic, the Robinia Courtyard was created for outdoor dining, as three restaurants converge on its patio. Robinia's morning spot is Black Locust Cafe, with crepes, standard breakfast favorites and an espresso bar.

One last lake. If you have time to sneak in a walk, head out of town by way of Wingra Park. Beyond its boathouse is a wooded trail along Lake Wingra. After the walk, grab a coffee or tea at Colectivo on Monroe Street and you'll be fit and caffeinated for the drive home. ■



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# **ROAD TRIP, IOWA STYLE**

Instead of making a beeline to Madison, slow down and take some time to explore the central, eastern and northeastern parts of the state. With university towns, cities on the rise and historic small towns, you may be surprised by the wealth of arts and culture, food and drink, and outdoor activities on these two routes.

WRITER: BETH ESLINGER





Above clockwise: Maytag Farm Reserve cheese in Newton; the Graduate hotel in downtown Iowa City; Lion Bridge Brewing in Cedar Rapids. Left: The rugged terrain along the northeast corner of Iowa is like nowhere else in the state-dramatically poised along the Mississippi River. Visiting Dubuque offers plenty of ways to soak in the river's majesty.

# **TRIP 1:**

This 292-mile route is the quickest way to Madison. Stop and see what's new while getting reacquainted with some old favorites.

### Local Culture

Whether it's your first or last stop, Maytag Dairy Farms in **Newton** offers zingy bites of their famous blue cheese. Their newest option, Farm Reserve, retains the natural rind, creating a funky, mushroom-like flavor. They also sell their classic rindless blue, which has a buttery, salty taste. While at the retail shop, pick up some aged cheddar, honey and jelly.

### Amid the Icons

Architecture fans flock to **Grinnell** to check out Merchants National Bank by Louis Henry Sullivan and other historic buildings downtown. Sullivan, a Frank Lloyd Wright mentor, is considered the father of the modern skyscraper. His buildings are known for art nouveau ornamentation—this 1914 bank has plenty to study. Today the building houses the chamber and is open for a quick peek. While downtown, take the half-mile architectural tour—visit grinnelwalkingtours.com to see the map.

### **Hot New Hotel**

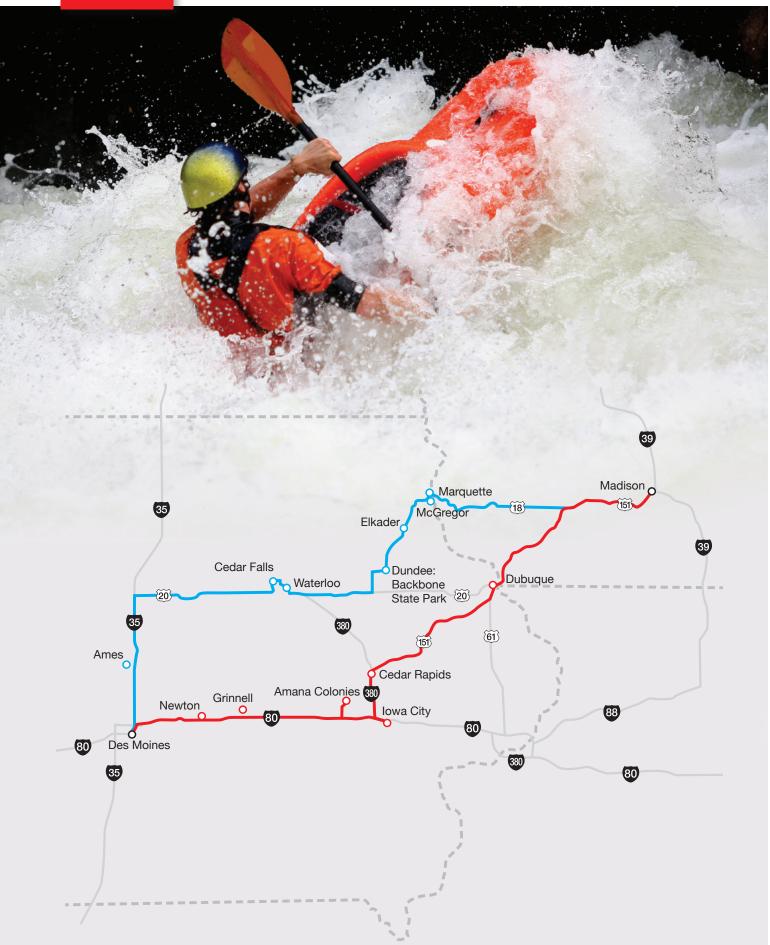
Reinvention isn't necessarily a word equated with **Amana**. But that's exactly what's happening in one of the 166-year-old textile mills. New last fall, Hotel Millwright provides all the amenities of upscale lodging, including suites and studios. A new restaurant, the Indigo Room, elevates Amana fare. The pork chops, for example, are topped with a bacon red-wine demiglace. There's even a new cocktail spot, Electric Thread Social Club. If you're in the mood for classic German fare in a beer hall setting, stop by Millstream Brau Haus nearby.

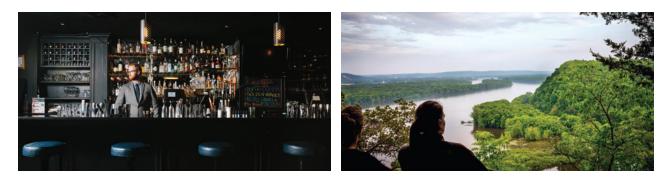
### The Place to Play

If you haven't been to lowa City in a few years, it's worth a revisit. New on the pedestrian mall in 2018, the Graduate hotel makes an ideal base camp for checking out area restaurants and shops. For a quick bite after checking in, head to Bread Market next door. The high-end grocery prepares fresh flatbreads, burgers, tacos and more. For happy hour or fine dining on a patio, Pullman Bar & Diner is a top spot. For an old-school experience, stop by Joe's Place rooftop patio. One of the top patios in town-Big Grove Brewery & Taproom-offers a relaxed attitude and international street food.

### **Museums and Murals**

A new crop of restaurateurs, makers, brewers and distillers are applying a fresh face to **Cedar Rapids**. Cobble Hill Eatery & Dispensary, nominated by the James Beard Foundation for Midwest Best Chef, has been the go-to restaurant since 2013 and features





Above left to right: Relax in Dubuque's Hotel Julien's elegantly aged bar; enjoy the Mississippi River bluff views on a hike at Effigy Mounds National Monument. Left: Watch paddlers ride the waves in downtown Elkader's water park. Below: Sample sweet or savory crepes at Lockwood Cafe in Ames.

outdoor dining. Their sister restaurant, Caucho, dishes tacos and also has a patio. And that's not it for al fresco eats—more than 45 restaurants and breweries have outdoor seating, including fan favorites Lion Bridge Brewing Co., Cedar Ridge Distillery & Winery, and Parlor City Pub & Eatery. While strolling through the city, shop for ceramics, glass, handmade goods and vintage threads.

### **Hip Historic District**

lowa's oldest city, **Dubuque** is defined by the Mississippi River and surrounding bluffs, plus picturesque brick streets and buildings in the city's historic districts. It's also an up-andcoming city for foodies, specifically the Historic Millwork District. Find tea and coffee at Inspire Cafe, brisket burgers at 7 Hills Brewery, casual bites and retro arcade games at Backpocket Dubuque, and scratch-made pasta and cocktails at Brazen. For an overnight, consider the Hotel Julien Dubuque or a downtown vacation rental (historic brick townhouses are some of the interesting options).

# **TRIP 2:**

Though slightly longer at 321 miles, this route takes you through some of lowa's prettiest terrain in northeastern lowa.

### Best Breakfast or Brew With a View

While Campustown and Main Street are the most common destinations, these outlier businesses offer unique-to-Ames eating and drinking experiences. Located in the Reliable Street complex (it's tricky to find even with GPS-take North Dakota north and turn left at Reliable Street right before the railroad tracks), Lockwood Cafe is one of those hip hangouts where students, young parents, working professionals and retirees converge for conversation with a bite of crepes and locally roasted coffee. If a brew outside is a better pit stop, head north to Alluvial Brewing for an IPA or sour to sip on the patio overlooking the area's verdant farms, or a grab a brew for your overnight destination.



### **Downtowns to Explore**

The Cedar River winding through Cedar Falls and Waterloo means excellent recreation opportunities (over 110 miles of bike trails) and scenic backdrops. Start your visit in downtown Cedar Falls, which boasts independent shops, breweries, coffee shops and restaurants. For an overnight, book a room at the historic Black Hawk Hotel, which dates to the city's founding in the mid-1800s. Enjoy a cocktail from on-site Bar Winslow (currently just to-go) before dinner. One of our favorite hangouts is SingleSpeed Brewery in downtown Waterloo. Housed in a former Wonder Bread factory, the brewery/restaurant has bike storage, a play area for the kids and an outdoor patio complete with vining hops. Also new downtown, Verve is a kombucha brewery that also serves new American cuisine with a global twist.

### **Favorite State Park**

lowa's oldest state park and one of the most beloved, **Backbone** near Strawberry Point treats visitors with diverse ways to get active. Drop down from the flat farmlands into the

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Maquoketa River valley park, which has rich topography for hiking, mountain biking and even fly fishing. Reserve a few hours to hike some of the park's trails, including Devil's Backbone, which traverses one of the limestone outcroppings; rock climbers with their own gear can scale the 70-foot cliffs. Stop by the giant Strawberry sculpture in downtown Strawberry Point for a fun social feed photo.

### Water Trails

Another river town, Elkader has the classic natural beauty found in the Driftless Area, a historic downtown, plus watery challenges. With one of three whitewater parks in the state, the town of about 1,400 people draws paddlers with several obstacles, including the Gobbler, a 22-foot-wide wave. You can watch the pros practice from the back patio at Schera's, an Algerian and Mediterranean restaurant with a diverse beer and wine menu. For a day on the river, rent a canoe or kayak in town and spend a few hours floating to Motor Mill Historic Site, where you can also hike near the six-story limestone structure.

### **Scenic Parks and Sweet Downtowns**

Less than 20 miles away, the Mississippi River defines McGregor and Marquette (the towns are less than two miles apart). Hike the bluff trails to see Native American burial mounds and stellar views of the river from Pikes Peak State Park and Effigy Mounds National Monument. It's possible to bag nearly 25 miles between the two parks. Explore the historic towns-McGregor is the larger of the two-to find restaurants, breweries and wineries, antiques and more. Several high-end vacation rentals are available in the area if you're up for an overnight before heading across the river into Wisconsin.

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# Now that's a bacon cheeseburger.





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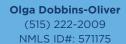
DSM MAGAZINE THE PEOPLE ISSUE UNVEILING "We literally talk about food all of the time," said Table 128 chef and co-owner Lynn Pritchard during our Feb. 11 virtual dinner party celebrating the annual People issue. Pritchard showcased the night's exquisite takeout menu, which consisted of cold snow peas and carrots with three different sauces; seared beef tenderloin with a red wine demi-glace, served with Romanesco cauliflower and potato puree; and for dessert, a warm chocolate pot de crème with a tiramisu macaroon. *dsm* contributors Deidre DeJear and Karla Walsh hosted the event, along with Dan Hanrahan, a cattle farmer with our sponsor for the evening, the Iowa Beef Industry Council. Local musician Ryne Doughty kicked things off with an original song. See behind-thescenes videos at dsmmagazine.com/februarydinnerparty/.



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- Wayne Middleton, VP and Manager — Project Management

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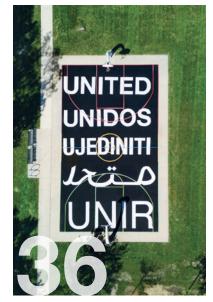
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**On the cover:** "Love Blooms," a mural by artist Jenna Brownlee, celebrates the city's cultural communities. See story, page 36. Photography courtesy of Liz Lidgett Gallery and Design.

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#DSMUSA #globalDSM

# IN HER FOOTSTEPS

# THREE MOTHERS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES FLED VIOLENCE TO BUILD NEW LIVES IN IOWA. THEIR DAUGHTERS ARE PARTNERS ON THEIR JOURNEY.

WRITER: RACHEL VOGEL-QUINN PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY



oms have it rough. Our culture agrees on that much. But raising kids in an unfamiliar country? That's another level of tough.

According to the American Immigration Council, 23.2 million female immigrants were

living in the United States in 2018, making up 14% of the total female population. They are more likely to live in poverty and less likely to have health insurance compared with U.S.-born women, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

But these facts don't tell the full story. More than 1 in 4 female immigrants have earned a bachelor's degree. Many more are working to fund their children's education.

For these women, children are both a responsibility and a support system. Their daughters, especially, serve as interpreters, guides and confidantes.

The three mothers featured on the following pages come from different continents. They speak different languages, and they have differing levels of education and income.

What they have in common is a love for their daughters, the next generation of women who, with their mothers' support, have set out on the road to the American Dream.



Grace Htee was around 4 years old when this photo was taken of the family in a Thai refugee camp. Turn the page to find out about the family's journey.

# **FLYING FREELY**

aw Kee Lar had never used a stove before she came to the United States. After years cooking over a fire in a Thai refugee camp, Paw didn't know how to feed her five kids in their new home.

Fortunately, her oldest daughter, Grace Htee, was there to help figure it out. In the refugee camp, Grace had cared for her younger siblings, hauled water to their bamboo hut, and hand-washed clothes in freezing water. Only 15 when the family resettled in the U.S., she was the first to learn English. She started serving as an interpreter for her parents, helping them grocery shop, read mail, pay bills and open a bank account.

Paw, 50, and Grace, 28, are members of the Karen ethnic group, a matriarchal society from Myanmar. Facing decades of oppression and violence from the government, millions of Karen people fled to refugee camps in Thailand, including Paw and her husband, Htee Po Klo.

Although the family received food assistance in the camp, it was never enough to feed all seven of them. Grace was forced to sneak through the forest to earn money for food, defying the rule against leaving the camp. With other supplies scarce, she would use her pencil down to the nub. She often brought hungry friends home from school for her mother to feed.

"You're a bird in a cage that cannot fly freely," Grace says about growing up in the camp. "You have to wait for people to come rescue you or feed you."

Through the U.N. Refugee Agency, the family got the chance to settle in Phoenix in 2007, then moved to Des Moines in 2013.

"When I come here, I cried almost every day because I didn't know how to communicate to the schoolteachers," says Paw, with Grace translating. "We didn't know how to help our kids, and we didn't understand how to read papers."

With no formal education and limited English skills, Paw and her husband had trouble finding jobs. Now she works at a local medical manufacturing company, but she still struggles to communicate with her co-workers.

"Sometimes you will secretly cry in the bathroom just

because you are burning inside," says Paw, "because you don't know the language."

Paw always wanted to go to school herself but didn't have the opportunity. So she focused on encouraging her kids' education. "When you come here, people helped you," Paw would tell her kids. "So one day you don't have to lean on other people all the time. You get an education, and you can stand up stronger. And then you can help people who are in your place."

Grace took that lesson to heart. She earned a degree in social work and human services from DMACC in 2018. She now works at EMBARC, an Iowa-based nonprofit supporting refugees and immigrants, particularly ethnic minorities from Myanmar. She also serves as vice president of the KYO-Karen Youth Organization in Iowa.

Last spring and summer, as Karen community members started falling ill with COVID-19, Grace began interpreting for patients and medical staff and setting up video calls for families with relatives in the hospital. While helping a community member with one such call, Grace caught the virus herself.

Pregnant with her first child, Grace was feverish and shivering for weeks. On the day her water broke, her husband was so sick with the virus he could barely drive her to the hospital. Due to visitor limitations, Grace had the baby without her husband or mother by her side. Her newborn son was whisked away to isolation before she could even see him. After two weeks, Grace's son came home healthy.

Even with a newborn and a hectic job, Grace finds time to spend with her parents and siblings: hiking, camping, or just dancing and singing in the living room. When the kids were growing up, Paw often jumped in on their games. Now she asks them to record her singing and dancing. As a child, Paw wanted to be an actress; she says she might get there in her next life.

Grace, too, loves to sing and has entered local competitions. She often performs with her mother and sisters at home. In those moments, Paw knows she has achieved her dream. "In this life, in my own world," Paw says with a smile, "I am an actress."



# **RAISED BOTH WAYS**

very evening, Samira Ikeljic, 50, and her daughter Mirela, 20, stay up until midnight in their Urbandale home, snacking on dried mangos and discussing the details of their
lives in a mixture of Bosnian and English.

"I love my mom," Mirela says. "We talk about a lot and get through a lot together. She's like a best friend."

Samira, who came to Des Moines as a refugee with her family in 1994 to escape the war in Bosnia, works for the Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services, where she helps coordinate services for refugees across the state. Mirela, a first-generation American, studies nursing at DMACC and works as a certified nursing assistant at an urgent care clinic.

Mirela uses her mother's example as motivation during her long days: "When school gets tough and I just want to be done, I think, 'No, my mom went through a war and finished school and got her degree. So I really have no excuse to drop out.'"

Samira grew up in a middle-class household in what was then Yugoslavia. She was in college when the Bosnian War broke out, which eventually killed 100,000 people and displaced another 2.2 million.

"It's something we are still trying to explain to ourselves," Samira says. "It's very hard to explain to someone who has not faced something like that."

In honor of her volunteer work during the war, Samira received a grant to finish her degree at the University of Missouri in Columbia. After graduating, she rejoined her parents and younger sister in Des Moines. Within two months, she was hired at the Bureau of Refugee Services, where she has spent 18 years. She married her husband, Saud, another Bosnian refugee, in 1998. Together they have two children, Mirela and a 14-year-old son, Maid. "I feel bad sometimes because [my parents] went through all this stuff—war and resettlement and everything—and now they're going through a pandemic," Mirela says. "So what else are they going to have to go through in their lifetime?"

Because Samira spoke English when she arrived in the U.S., she adjusted to life here faster than her parents, who relied on Samira and her sister for help.

"It takes years and years, and you still don't know everything," Samira says. "You have to learn how everything functions, from going to the store to using health benefits to paying into retirement. The system is so different from what we used to have back home."

For Samira, one of the biggest challenges was raising children in a new country. She calls the experience a "cultural confrontation." Growing up, her family knew everyone in her neighborhood and school. In Iowa, she had to keep a close eye on her kids and their friends. She focused on setting limits and reinforcing values like family time, honest communication, and respect for other cultures.

"You try to raise them both ways," Samira says. "I think [refugee and immigrant] parents need to be pretty flexible. I completely agree 100% that we need to keep our heritage and teach our children where they come from. ... But we have to accept the positive sides of American culture."

Mirela describes her mom as "open-minded" and "a people person." From her mother's stories over the years, Mirela has learned the importance of giving back to the community that welcomed her parents.

Samira takes great pride in her daughter's accomplishments and eagerly shares photos with her colleagues, like Mirela's first day wearing scrubs or their yard sign reading "A Health Care Hero Lives Here."

Samira reflects: "Those are the moments that reinforce that 'Well, I guess I'm doing something right in my life.'"



# FAITH AND FORTITUDE

hen Rebeca Ibrahim's three daughters were young, she sometimes couldn't afford enough food for the family. She remembers one day when her youngest daughter, Ketego, opened

the fridge and found it completely empty.

"I feel bad until now," Rebeca says about that experience. "That never goes out of my mind."

Rebeca, 52, is no stranger to hunger. Born and raised in what is now South Sudan, her family had to forage for food in the forest. She fled the country in 1999 due to civil war and arrived in the United States four years later.

"I was really tired and exhausted because I was a single mom," Rebeca says of her first few years in the country. "That was really rough. ... But I do my best, so life can go on."

Without a car, Rebeca walked to her doctor's appointments while pregnant with her middle daughter, Karina. Because she only spoke Arabic, she had to rely on others to translate for her. But she tried to stay optimistic for her daughters.

"It's gonna be OK," Rebeca recalls saying to them. "We are not going to live like this. Everything come hard, but everything going to be OK."

Rebeca eventually started learning English, earned her driver's license, became a citizen, and got a job in housekeeping with UnityPoint Health. She lives in Oakridge Neighborhood in Des Moines.

Although Rebeca had dreamed of attending school herself when she first came to this country, she had to

focus on supporting her family. She works overtime, six days a week, so her daughters can attend private school, and she's proud of their good grades.

"I want them to accomplish something," Rebeca says. "I don't want them to be like me, in housekeeping. I want them to be more than me. That's why I work hard."

Rebeca's oldest daughter, Levo, is the first in her family to attend college, studying nursing at DMACC. Karina, 15, is a sophomore at Dowling Catholic and dreams of becoming a movie producer. She plays basketball and takes piano lessons. Ketego, 13, attends Holy Family and plays guitar.

Karina describes her mom with a litany of positive adjectives: strong, hardworking, brave and selfless. She says her mother supports her no matter what. When Karina wanted to be a pilot as a child, her mom spent her limited funds on books about planes.

"She's like the best mom," Karina says. "I just want her to be happy and proud."

When her kids are finally grown and settled, Rebeca hopes she can save enough to visit her mother, sister and brother in South Sudan.

"I can't quit," she says, even though she worries about getting COVID-19 at work. "When I quit, everything goes off. So I just keep going."

For now, Rebeca looks forward to Tuesdays, her day off, when she drives her daughters to lessons and cooks a Sudanese meal for dinner. In the car, she and the girls goof around and sing along to the radio.

"When I sing, they start laughing," Rebeca says. "We got to laugh."  $\hfill\blacksquare$ 

Rebeca Ibrahim, originally from South Sudan, is raising three daughters in Des Moines. All three have attended private school, including Karina (shown here), a sophomore at Dowling Catholic.





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# BLACK, QUEER AND DISABLED, BUFFY JAMISON HAS LEARNED SELF-LOVE AFTER YEARS OF STRUGGLE. NOW THE LGBTQ LEADER IS HELPING OTHERS DO THE SAME.

WRITER: RACHEL VOGEL QUINN PHOTOGRAPHER: JANAE GRAY

**BUFFY JAMISON FIRST THOUGHT ABOUT COMMITTING SUICIDE AT 8 YEARS OLD.** The thoughts came back again at 12, and then again at 19.

"It was just because of how overwhelmed I was all the time," Jamison says, "because of how I was being treated."

Born female in Des Moines, Jamison, 30, identifies as Black, disabled, pansexual and nonbinary. A co-founder and co-chair of the Iowa Queer Communities of Color Coalition (IQCCC), Jamison earned a master's degree in higher education with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion from the University of Denver. Jamison, who uses the pronouns "they" and "them," has a fierce passion for

Buffy Jamison of Des Moines is co-founder and co-chair of the Iowa Queer Communities of Color Coalition. social justice and education, especially for students from marginalized communities.

"I want to go through the world trying to make things better," Jamison says, "and do so by causing the least amount of harm that I possibly can."

Jamison has autism, and started feeling isolated from peers in preschool. At the time, the youth would rock back and forth as a form of stimming, a set of repetitive movements that's common in people with the disorder. In first grade, the verbal abuse started. It got worse through elementary and middle school.

"Education was always a double-edged sword for me," Jamison says.

"Smart" was one of the only positive descriptors Jamison heard from teachers and classmates growing up. Academics became an escape from isolation. After graduating from Roosevelt High School, Jamison enrolled at DMACC, studying social justice.

That journey continued when Jamison transferred to lowa State University and joined the NCORE-ISCORE Project, a yearlong developmental program centered on issues of race and ethnicity. There, Jamison first heard the term "intersectionality," which describes the interactions of race, class and gender in the lives of individuals and groups.

"Oh, my gosh, this is it," Jamison recalls thinking at the time. "This is the word that describes my entire life. This is everything that I have been missing up until now from my education."

Now Jamison uses intersectionality as a lens to see the world.

"Buffy has always challenged me to think more critically about life and social justice than any other peers I have been in class with," says Viki Eagle, a classmate from the University of Denver. Jamison is "super brilliant

# "I WANT TO GO THROUGH THE WORLD TRYING TO MAKE THINGS BETTER AND DO SO BY CAUSING THE LEAST AMOUNT OF HARM THAT I POSSIBLY CAN."

BUFFY JAMISON

and [thinks] deeply about everything from all angles before speaking."

Back in lowa after graduate school, Jamison started noticing how queer people of color often felt left out—and even unsafe—in spaces meant for LGBTQ individuals. And in Black communities, they faced homophobia and discrimination.

During a conversation with friends at Smokey Row, the idea for IQCCC was born. The group organized a statewide survey and identified four main topics of concern for queer people of color: isolation, safety, health care and employment.

Although the pandemic slowed the group's launch, IQCCC is focusing on awareness and direct service in 2021. In partnership with the Des Moines Pride Center, the organization plans to start a pantry to hand out safe-sex kits and other supplies.

"I've learned more and more about the sheer lack of resources that really exists out there for this demographic," Jamison says.

Last October, Jamison was awarded the LGBTQIA Leadership Award from the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame. As recently as two years ago, they were terrified of public speaking. But during the acceptance speech, Jamison spoke confidently from the podium. It was a mark of how much they had grown since earlier days of anxiety.

"I'm most proud of being resilient enough to still be here," Jamison says, "still thriving and still finding ways to laugh and to be happy in myself and my body."

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#### A NEW ALBUM SHOWCASES WHY PARRANDEROS LATIN COMBO'S DRIVING RHYTHMS AND LIVELY BLEND OF STYLES KEEP FANS ON THEIR FEET.

WRITER: CHAD TAYLOR PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

Parranderos Latin Combo is a fusion of sounds. Left: Percussionist and composer Ryan Mullin lays down the beat. This page: Fernando Aveiga jams on the accordion.

the middle of December, amid the pre-Christmas chill and the city's first big snowfall, Parranderos Latin Combo (PLC) is gathering at Sonic Factory in the Drake neighborhood to record. To say this is

Parranderos' most ambitious album to date wouldn't be an exaggeration.

"It's going to be a really wild album," says percussionist and composer Ryan Mullin. "There are six or seven different genres of music. There's even our first song in English, which should be a lot of fun."

Ambition is nothing new for Parranderos. The band whose size can vary from a half dozen members to as many as 14—has been hard at work for the past decade, taking its fast-paced, Latin-party sound to venues throughout the Midwest. Brought together over a love for Latin sounds and a desire to have a good time (their name roughly translates to "partygoers"), Parranderos consists of a globetrotting mix of talent and musical styles.

For this album, for example, Juan Sebastian Ramirez pianist, composer, arranger and the pride of Medellin, Colombia—has flown into town to lay down piano tracks. Joining him is Juan Carlos Chaurand, a Mexican-born Latin percussionist who lives in Kansas City and splits his time between Parranderos and K.C.'s Making Movies. Locally, the list of talent is just as diverse. Guitarist and accordionist Fernando Aveiga hails from Ecuador, while bassist Eddie Colon and sound engineer Heriberto Roque are both from Puerto Rico.

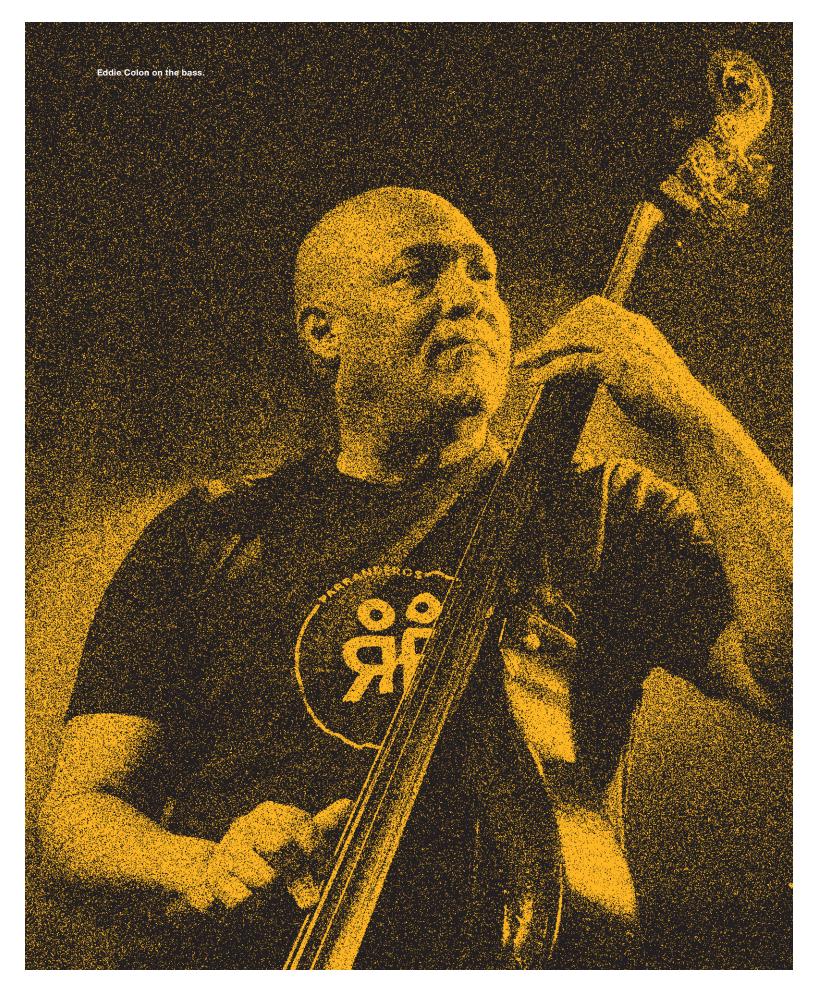
#### **COMBINING GENRES**

As might be expected from such a varied cast of musicians, Parranderos' sound is also a melting pot. Drawing inspiration from salsa, merengue and cumbia (Columbian folk music), as well as U.S. rock and Latin pop, there's a lot going on in a typical set. "We'll try and combine [genres] and not really be too serious about it," Mullin says.

"[Our music is] a reflection of our iPods," Aveiga adds. "One thing that's common with everyone that's in the band is that at some point all of us loved the Doors, loved Nirvana. We want to play Latin music with Latin instrumentation, and we love that music. But in our downtime we listen to rap and rock as well. All of that influences how we play."

It's that something-for-everyone approach that has helped make PLC shows engaging, vibrant and popular. People may come to their first PLC show not knowing what to expect, but the experience quickly transforms them into dedicated fans. That's a point of pride for band members, who have always considered expanding the audience for Latin music to be just as important as pleasing longtime listeners.

"Playing around the Midwest, there aren't necessarily huge communities for a particular style," Mullin says. "So we would mix things up until people started dancing. It had



nothing to do what we wanted; it was about what the people wanted.

"Now, we can take different styles and make a hybrid; we can do some crossover sounds," he adds. "We're just out here making the music that we want to hear."

This approach, Mullin says, isn't typical of Latin bands. "[Latin musicians] might play in different groups, but it's always 'this is a salsa group, this is a cumbia group,'" he says. "For us, [Aveiga] writes all our tunes on guitar. Then we'll listen to those and, based on how he sings it or album, titled "El Gran Chantaje," they do, as it features a range of styles larger than anything the band has attempted in the past.

Last year was supposed to be a transformative year for the band. The album was conceived and musicians were planning to fly in from around the world to contribute, plus PLC had a packed schedule of shows planned.

Then, COVID. "We had about 30 gigs booked in April, then everything shut down," Mullin recalls. "Thirty gigs! At \$1,000 a show at least, that's money that could go a long

## "PLC IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY DES MOINES IS COOL."

AMNER MARTINEZ

what the chord progressions are, we'll say, 'OK, that sounds like a salsa tune, this one's cumbia ...' and kind of build from there."

However they do it, the formula seems to have worked. PLC shows are high-energy, loud affairs that get people moving. Whether you catch them in a bar, on a dance floor or at a summer music festival, Parranderos' rhythms will find your feet.

"PLC provided me with the opportunity to measurably improve my salsa dancing skills," says Penne Gatton, executive director of Salsa Des Moines. "The Latin beat, instruments and sound that is created within this group of musicians make them a unique band in Des Moines. ... [They've] created a personal awareness of another musical genre and culture that I've grown to embrace."

#### **NEW ALBUM**

Back in the studio for the first time in seven years, the band members wanted to do something big. And with their new way towards getting an album done."

Mullin applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Iowa Arts Council, which is covering the album's production costs. Beyond that, members have been using every available moment to record, and guest musicians have been accommodated whenever schedules have allowed.

All of this has made the recording schedule more chaotic than planned, but PLC is making it work. As of press time, they were hoping to release the album sometime this spring, as well as hoping venues would start safely scheduling shows again by summer.

Whenever the album is ready and shows resume, their fans—new and old—are sure to be waiting. "PLC is one of the reasons why Des Moines is cool," says Amner Martinez, co-founder of the Latino Arts Initiative. "They bring us what we would only be able to get in a big city. We shouldn't take them for granted."

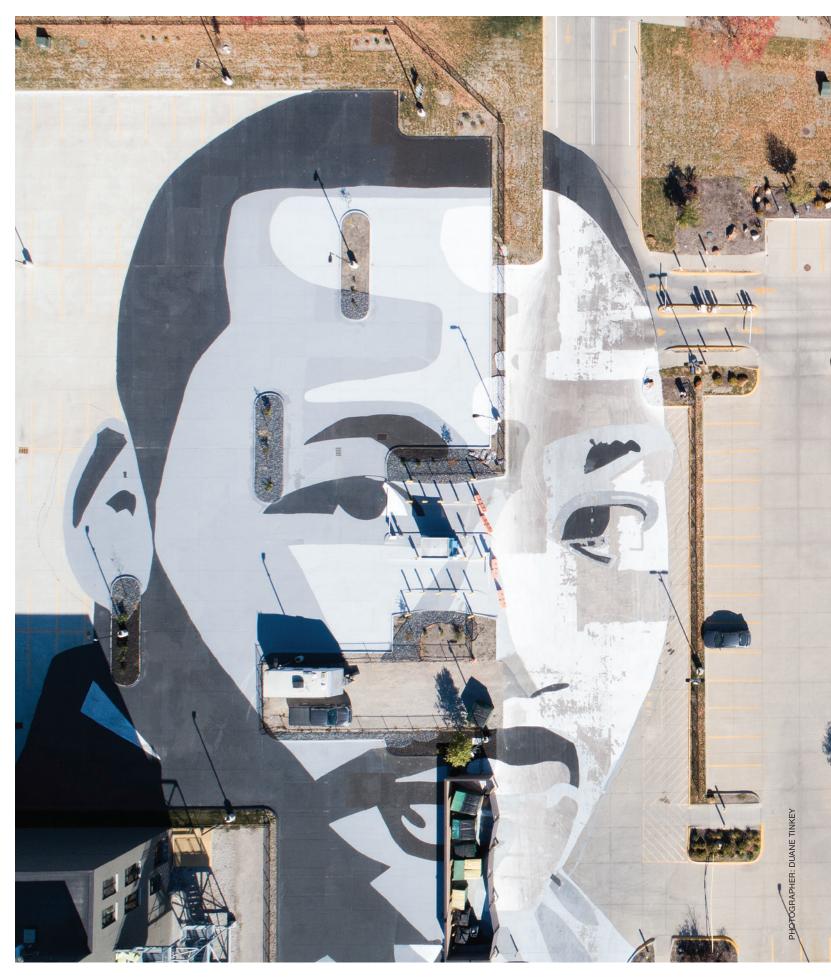
To know someone is to understand and to appreciate who they are, including their history and their culture.

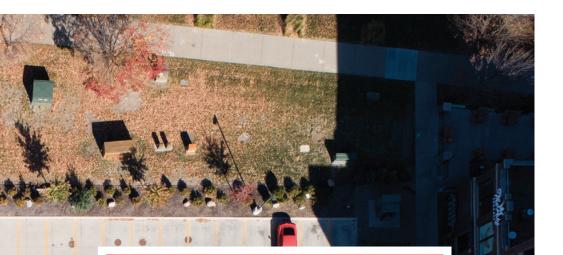
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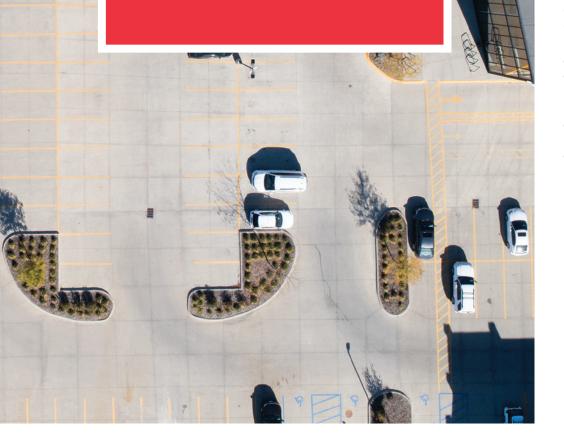




# THE ART OF

REFLECTING THE METRO AREA'S DIVERSITY, MURALS SHARE MESSAGES OF ACCEPTANCE, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

WRITER: ANGELA M. JACKSON



#### MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. 300 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway

This massive, 300-by-214-foot portrait is displayed on the ground of a cement parking lot along Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway downtown. With the help of some 35 volunteers, local artist Michael Bowser created the mural using monochromatic tones of grays and blacks. Real estate developer Rich Eychaner, along with other local business owners, initiated and supported the project.

Completed last September, the work stemmed from the increased focus on social justice following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other Black citizens. Given that context, the mural evokes the words King wrote in 1963: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. ... Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."



#### "LOVE BLOOMS" (above) 208 Court Ave.

At first glance, "Love Blooms," created by Des Moines artist Jenna Brownlee in the Historic Court District, may not look like a diversity-themed work: Florals, not faces, form the mural's focus. But each of those blooms—an lowa prairie rose, a Bosnian lily, a Mexican dahlia and an Indian lotus, among others—represents a different cultural community within the city.

"The purpose of the mural is ... to celebrate our diverse community by embracing as many people as possible," says Liz Lidgett, owner of Liz Lidgett Gallery and Design, which managed the project. "We understand representation matters."

Painted on the side of RōCA restaurant last November, the mural was initiated by the World Food and Music Festival as a way to convey the festival's goal of being a symbol of inclusivity and peace. The work was funded by an anonymous donor through the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines.

#### "SI SE PUEDE: DREAM" (right) 826 Scott Ave.

For this mural at the bilingual Comingo Early Education Center, Des Moines artist Marissa Monstera Hernandez used a graphic style and incorporated hues of brown, orange, green and blue. The work includes images of children of color, plus butterflies, which "represent migration—like the monarch," Hernandez says.

"Si se puede" typically is translated as "it can be done" or "yes, you can." That message is reinforced with images—a stethoscope, musical notes, a scientific beaker, math symbols and a painter's palette—that represent various vocations.

"I was motivated to design something that is reaffirming to children of color," Hernandez says. "Growing up, I was not given enough encouragement. I wanted the mural to affirm children so they would know that they can do whatever they want ... even if they are the first to do it."

Hernandez uses murals and other works as tools for accessibility and representation. Her designs, she says, are intended to "reflect the diversity that is actually present in Des Moines."



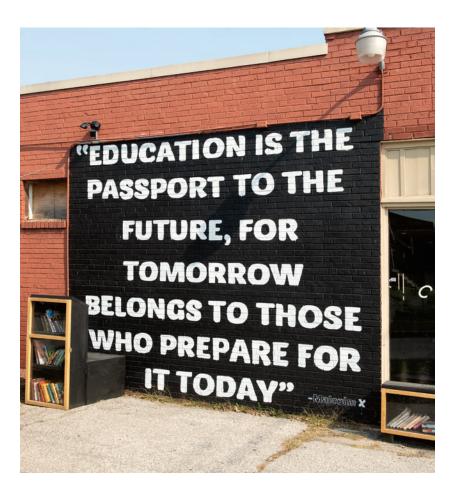


#### "A PLACE TO GROW" (left) 2500 Forest Ave.

Brooklyn, New York-based multidisciplinary artist Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya (pronounced PINGbodee-bak-ee-ah) used a vibrant yet warm palette of pink, blue, yellow and red to create this striking 30-by-100foot mural on the side of the Gregory and Suzie Glazer Burt Boys and Girls Club on the Drake University campus. Assisted by then-Drake students Marissa Monstera Hernandez and Kate Segler, the artist completed the mural in just 12 days in June 2019.

The work, which faces the club's playground, features four large portraits of diverse women. It's meant to inspire the club's youths to dream big, a message reinforced by the word "grow" at the mural's center. Phingbodhipakkiya (pictured in the photo) drew on input from club kids in creating the mural, with the goal of fostering a feeling of belonging.

The project, coordinated and managed by Liz Lidgett of Liz Lidgett Gallery and Design, was the result of a collaborative effort involving local businesses, nonprofits and volunteers. Phingbodhipakkiya, a former neuroscientist and two-time TED speaker, is now an artist, educator and STEM advocate who, in addition to murals, creates 3D sculptures and augmented animations. Her work has appeared in the New York Times, among other publications, as well as in museums across the country. In her artist's statement, she says she seeks to challenge people "to reexamine their beliefs, truly understand someone else's perspective, and consider what a better world could look like."

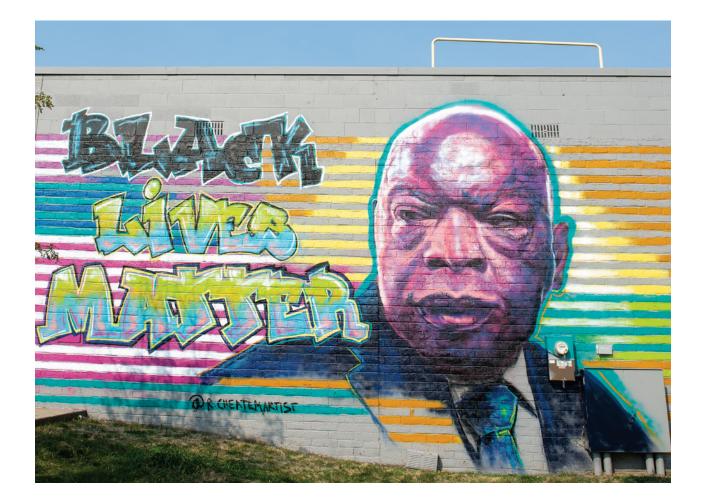


#### MALCOLM X (above) 4719 University Ave.

Inspired by Malcolm X's legacy of self-empowerment and determination, nationally acclaimed artist Jordan Weber created this mural on the wall of Universal Kutz barbershop in the Franklin neighborhood. The quote from Malcolm X—"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today"— was chosen with input from the barbershop's owners and patrons.

The education theme extends to the installation's lending library, which is filled with books by authors of color. The library structures double as seating.

The project was managed by Group Creative Services and commissioned by Invest DSM, a collaboration between the city of Des Moines and Polk County to revitalize neighborhoods. The Des Moines-based Weber, who is known for his installations, sculptures and public art that address social justice issues, focused on Malcolm X for an earlier project at the site of the civil rights leader's birth home in Omaha.



#### JOHN LEWIS (above) 1215 Sixth Ave.

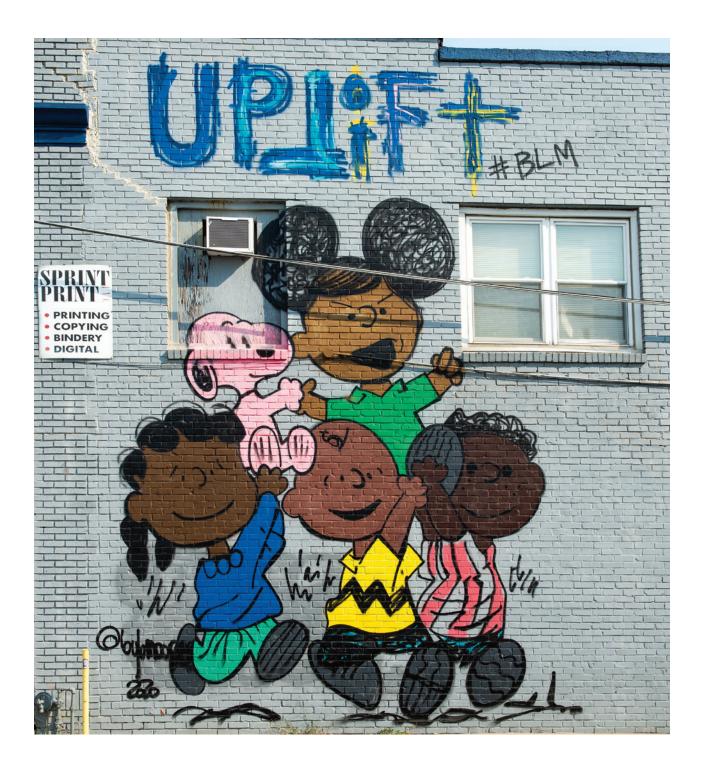
A tribute to civil rights leader John Lewis, this colorful mural by artist Reuben Cheatem was completed last August on the south wall of University Laundry. The work was a project of Third Space, a local community mural program involving a coalition of artists. Since 2017, the group has curated more than 30 murals on Des Moines' east, north and south sides. Cheatem, formerly of New Orleans, currently lives in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

John Lewis once said, "If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it." Cheatem's portrait of Lewis inspires onlookers to action; the colors are abundant, saturated and layered, and the words "Black Lives Matter" boldly stand out against vertical lines of red, white and blue. The word "Black" is painted in black, conveying pride and strength.

#### "UNITED" (right) 1650 Garfield Ave.

At Martin Luther King Jr. Park, kids play on a basketball court with the word "united" painted in five languages spoken by neighborhood residents: English, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic and French (for the area's Congolese immigrants). The mural, created by Des Moines artist Jordan Weber, is intended to represent how competition and play can help foster unity.





#### **"UPLIFT"**

#### Euclid and Second Avenues

"Uplift" features a group of reimagined Peanuts characters, created to reflect the diverse Highland Park neighborhood where the mural's artist, Robert Moore, spent much of his youth. Charlie Brown, who's lifting up Sally, is meant to convey the idea of uplifting Black girls and women. Moore works in a variety of mediums and gained national notice last summer with his "Harvesting Humanity" project, which projected images of George Floyd, Rosa Parks and Malcolm X on Dallas County grain silos.

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH DIVERSITY

Challenging students to examine cultural biases and stereotypes in their educational journey

"DMU is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which every student and employee can thrive on academic, professional and personal levels. Against the backdrop of rapid diversificiation in the world around us, DMU is committed to effectively preparing culturally sensitive health care professionals."

**ANGELA L. WALKER FRANKLIN, PH.D.** *President and Chief Executive Officer* 



Join us. Invest in us. Advance with us.

# UPLIFTING VETERANS

#### JATHAN CHICOINE BRINGS HIS RICH LIFE EXPERIENCES TO HIS WORK WITH IOWA SERVICE MEMBERS.

WRITER: BRIANNE SANCHEZ PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

**BEFORE BASIC TRAINING,** before Afghanistan, before the Mississippi, before Peru and Paris, before Central lowa and his bison, Jathan Chicoine emerged from a purification lodge and was surrounded by the Nakota tribal community in ceremony. Tribal elders and veterans stood Chicoine next to his mother as they shared traditional soldier songs for a young warrior about to embark on his military career.

"That foundational experience came to unfold in my life in meaningful ways," says Chicoine, 44, who is French Canadian by heritage (his name is pronounced "shiquinn"). His mother had been working as a tribal drug and alcohol counselor, and the ceremony was arranged through the generosity of the Wase Wakpa community.

"My mom called him a grasshopper," says Chad Neilson, a member of the Nakota community who was

Jathan Chicoine and his wife, Racheal Ruble, are restoring prairie north of Ames with the help of a small bison herd. "I FIND A LOT OF BALANCE WHEN I'M WORKING ON THE FARM. THE FARM IS A PLACE OF HEALING, AND INSPIRATION FOR GREATER EXCELLENCE." JATHAN CHICOINE

part of the ceremony that day in 1994, and who has been a friend and teacher to Chicoine ever since.

"He was friendly, inquisitive, kind and caring," Neilson recalls of the then 17-year-old Chicoine, adding that not much has changed: "He's honorable."

Later as a graduate student in South Dakota, Chicoine co-founded a Veterans Resource Center and began the cross-cultural work that he continues today as a program manager for Home Base Iowa, which connects veterans and transitioning service members with career opportunities in the state.

"For me to be able to continue working with veterans is an honor and a privilege," Chicoine says. "We have veterans of different branches, generations, wars, conflicts, demographics."

His goal is to uplift common qualities of veterans—a mission-focused mindset, risk calculation, innovation—that make them incredible contributors. He's interested in shifting conversations with veterans, their families and business leaders from focusing on post-traumatic stress to post-traumatic growth.

#### FINDING PURPOSE

Ceremony bookmarks many of the most meaningful chapters of Chicoine's life. He would return to the tribe for a re-grounding ritual following his service as a U.S. Navy SEAL and intelligence specialist.

He left the military shortly before the attacks of 9/11 and was uncertain whether he would be called back into service. After several restless months, Chicoine needed a sense of renewal and a chance to explore his freedom.

"We're missing a reintegration ceremony," Chicoine says of the official military process of returning to civilian life. For him, it was purely bureaucratic.

To reconnect, he set off on a solo kayak trip down the Mississippi River. It was October, and at the end of his first day paddling from Hastings, Minnesota, with a fishing pole and a copy of "Huckleberry Finn," he recalls seeing an eagle land on the sandbar just ahead, a huge fish in its talons. "When you give up on humanity and there's a lot of negativity, you need to do a trip like that," he says.

When he finally pulled out at Hannibal, Missouri, that December, one of the people who had heard about his journey was Racheal Ruble, a college student at the time whose mother persuaded her to come home to meet the kayaker who was sleeping in the attic of an 1800s church. They connected at an art gallery, and met again on a trip to Paris the following spring. Later, the couple married.

"In all of his travels and everywhere he goes, [Jathan] can make those connections quickly," Ruble says. "He's very open, very curious, very interested in people, and they respond to that."

After his time traversing the river, Chicoine hitchhiked home with other adventures in mind. "I wanted to learn languages; I wanted to interact cross-culturally," he says. A trip to Peru to work with local healers set the stage for graduate studies in cultural anthropology.

He and Racheal returned to the Story County area where he had roots, and later welcomed daughter Mirai. There, they are restoring endangered remnant prairie and oak savanna ecosystems on a family acreage. They've reintroduced bison and manage a small family herd, which contributes to biodiversity.

"I find a lot of balance when I'm working on the farm," Chicoine says. "The farm is a place of healing, and inspiration for greater excellence."

He tells of a powerful traditional tribal "singing in" ceremony that welcomed the bison back to the land, and likens the animal's strength and fortitude to that of his fellow veterans, whom he sometimes invites out to experience the environment. For Chicoine, fostering the inclusive biodiversity of life on his farm and inviting others to share in it is central to this chapter.

"The human experience is continually flowing, rather than having a beginning and an ending," he says. "That story is continuing to unfold, and I think that's the excitement of all of it."



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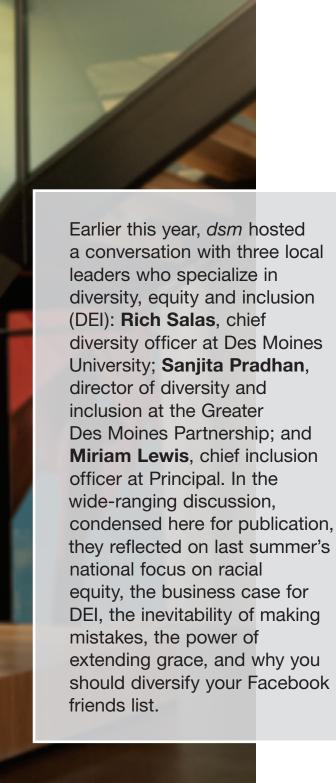
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# **'START SOMEWHERE'** SMALL STEPS CAN LEAD TO BIG CHANGES, INCLUSION LEADERS SAY.

WRITER: MISSY KEENAN

Sanjita Pradhan, director of diversity and inclusion at the Greater Des Moines Partnership.



### What inspired you to get into diversity, equity and inclusion work?

*Rich Salas:* I grew up poor in rural Texas, and I'm the first in my family of 11 to go to college. My experiences help me understand the needs of students and families I've worked with. The additional layers of poverty or being first in a family to pursue higher education can be daunting for even the brightest individuals.

Sanjita Pradhan: I came to Iowa from Nepal with my family in 2006. I have a master's degree in business administration from the Indian Institute of Technology, but the first few years of my job search were challenging as people didn't understand the quality of my education. As a person of color and a first-generation immigrant, I've experienced marginalization and exclusion. This helps me understand the challenges of other marginalized groups and to be a better advocate.

*Miriam Lewis:* Back when I ran business units for manufacturing companies, employees were getting stuck in roles for too long and needed professional development. That frustrated me, but my frustration revealed a passion for helping people. I moved into HR, where I developed talent, created career mobility and [helped foster] a more engaged workforce. This equipped me for my current DEI work. Helping employees, cultivating ideas and empowering divergent opinions is my mission. Inclusion is linked to everything I do.

#### Tell us about your organization's DEI program.

*Lewis:* Our DEI goals are woven into all areas of the company. Those goals are part of our corporate scorecard—one of 12 measures that drive and monitor success and determine employee bonuses.

**Pradhan:** The Partnership has been doing DEI work for many years. Our Inclusion Council is made up of representatives from about 45 local employers who share DEI best practices, celebrate success through our Inclusion Award, and inspire action to be the change they want to see in the world.

Last year we created an internal DEI strategy in addition to our existing external strategy. We created an internal plan weaving DEI goals into our strategic plans focused on attraction and retention of a diverse workforce, building an inclusive workplace, and building an inclusive community in Greater Des Moines to be a global competitor.

*Salas:* When I started here nine years ago, DMU didn't have a DEI plan beyond hosting speakers and other tip-of-the-iceberg efforts. At the request of our president, Dr. Angela Franklin, I developed a DEI plan tying into strategies across the university.

I'm especially proud that we're one of only a few medical institutions nationally embedding culturally responsive care into our curriculum. We address implicit bias, anti-racism, cultural differences, and skills our future health care providers will need in a rapidly changing society, providing compassionate, respectful, culturally responsive care.

After George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were killed last year and as the Black Lives Matter movement gained strength and prominence, DEI came into sharp focus in organizations across the country. How did those events affect your organizations?

*Pradhan:* Last summer we had an uptick in local organizations wanting to start or ramp up DEI efforts. Organizations who were doing diversity and inclusion work also started focusing on equity, particularly racial equity.

We partnered with United Way to conclude a 21-Day Equity Challenge with our annual summit, which this year focused on equity and had more than 700 participants. We rallied more than 200 CEOs to sign a Commitment to Racial Equity. We hope these actions will help our corporate partners do more to move the needle on racial equity.

*Lewis:* These are tough times that just hit you in the heart. Over the summer, we were already implementing our new global inclusion strategy. In addition, we pivoted to respond to the moment. First, we made it crystal clear that diversity and inclusion are core values for Principal, so we reaffirmed our commitment internally and externally.

We supported our employees by encouraging them to use our employee assistance program; we provided a group employee assistance program for members of the African American Black Employee Resource Group to go through a healing process together; and we provided an EAP for our leaders to help them know how to support employees during these times.

We also offered free new tools to our small- to medium-sized customers who don't have the resources to do this work on their own.

Salas: The summer's events were of course concerning to many students, faculty and staff. After talking to students and DMU leadership, we came up with "DMU Stands in Solidarity with White Coats for Black Lives." We had more than 300 students standing in front of the university together in their white coats. Our president, a member of our board of trustees, and a couple of students spoke—one who grew up near where George Floyd was murdered.

We also created an "8:46 challenge" representing how long the officer's knee was on Mr. Floyd's neck. The challenge was to do eight things to learn more about racial justice, take four actions to make a difference, and find six opportunities to discuss these issues with others.

These events have helped embolden our campus not to be neutral on these issues, brought our campus together in solidarity, and helped us engage in tough conversations, especially regarding racial disparities in health care.

#### Focusing on DEI not only is the right thing to do, it's also key to serving a diverse customer base in today's marketplace. Can you speak to that?

*Salas:* Research shows that building a strong, diverse team improves performance and provides a return on investment. Sometimes students wonder whether they need to





"YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK ON EGGSHELLS; YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE MISTAKES.... ACKNOWLEDGE MISTAKES, LEARN AND MOVE FORWARD."

RICH SALAS

understand culturally responsive care if they plan to practice in Iowa. I remind my students that kids at our local schools speak more than 80 languages. Our students don't need to learn to speak 80 languages, but they need to understand both their own implicit biases and their future patients' cultural nuances.

*Lewis:* We need our employee base to mirror our customer base so employees understand how customers think and can proactively meet their needs. To be competitive in this global marketplace, our employees need to be as fluent in DEI as they are in our business.

When competing for business and all else is equal between us and a competitor, DEI is often the jump ball. We were recently awarded a customer's business because of our commitment to and continuous progress in diversity and inclusion.

**Pradhan:** The U.S. is predicted to be minority white by 2045. Our workforce will look different and have different needs, and so will our customers. Investing time and resources on DEI helps attract and retain diverse talent, tap

into new markets, make companies more profitable, and create an inclusive environment of innovation and growth. This hard and long journey of DEI work has great benefits.

We have a program to work with the country's 2 million highly skilled, foreign-born individuals who are under- or unemployed. We help employers understand foreign credentials so they can find highly educated talent ready to work right in our backyard.

### What tips would you suggest to organizations wanting to expand their DEI work?

Salas: The DMU president is supportive of DEI work, which is ideal. If you don't have support from your top person, DEI work can be challenging, but it still must be done. Try to find other executive champions to support you. Then soon your CEO should see the value of your efforts.

**Pradhan:** Often companies come at DEI from one angle usually training. Training is good, but if it's stand-alone instead of part of your strategy, it's less likely to be successful and it can lead to "diversity fatigue."

To be successful, you should identify your business case for DEI, create a diversity statement or include DEI in your core values, and tie DEI into your strategic plan, including your workforce, workplace and marketplace or community. Then communicate your business case and plan to employees and stakeholders, engage them to help implement the plan, and review it annually. You should have a dedicated person leading DEI to be most successful.

#### What do you recommend for small businesses that aren't sure how to get started with DEI work—or don't have the resources for everything you've described?

**Pradhan:** Smaller businesses can't always have full-time staff to lead DEI, so the Partnership supports them with resources on our website, events and consulting.

*Salas:* Don't worry about being perfect. Start somewhere with one or two objectives and do what you can. Are people using language at work that isn't inclusive? Are there populations you should reach out to? Then revisit your goals periodically. Things change—situations,

challenges, relationships, laws. But start somewhere. You don't have to walk on eggshells; you're going to make mistakes. I've been doing this work for 30 years, and I still make mistakes. Acknowledge mistakes, learn and move forward.

*Lewis:* The late tennis player Arthur Ashe said, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." Networking is important. Just reach out and ask questions. It's a two-way relationship, and there's always opportunity to learn and grow. Often today people are looking for a debate. This work isn't about debating; it's about dialogue, extending grace, and listening and learning from each other's experiences and perspectives.

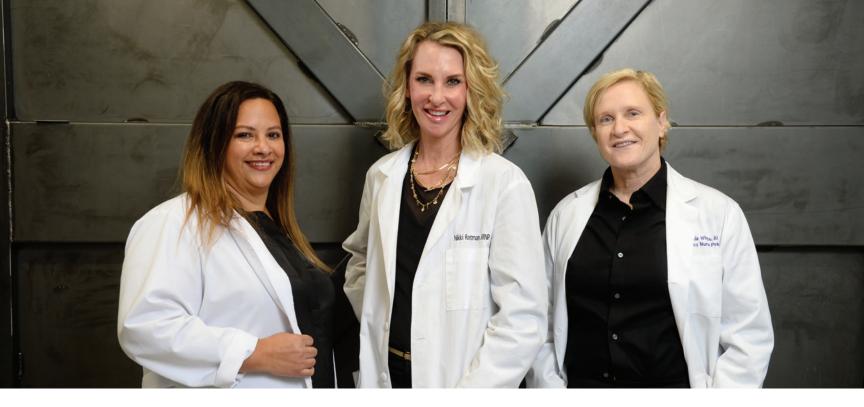
#### What suggestions do you have for individuals who want to keep learning, growing and creating a more equitable and inclusive world?

*Lewis:* I have two practical tips. First, pull out your phone or scroll down your social media feed. If you scroll more than three times and everyone looks like you, expand your network.

Secondly, drive change within your areas of passion or sphere of influence. If you work in marketing, look for opportunities to make your materials more inclusive. If you work in government affairs, drive progress for groups you haven't focused on before. If you work in talent acquisition, look for opportunities to expand your candidate slate. It takes all of us doing this work to make meaningful change.

**Pradhan:** I present on these topics a lot, and people can feel overwhelmed—like they need to learn about every culture. You don't have to do a Ph.D. on every culture, but you can learn five new things about one culture. When I worked with refugees, I learned to say hello and thank you in my clients' languages. When I welcomed a family to the U.S. in their language, their eyes would light up and they trusted me as someone who cared.

Just do one small thing at a time. Diversify your network. Read an article or watch a movie on DEI topics. Read a book from an author who is different from you. Have an open mind, ask questions and engage in civil conversations. These things go a long way.





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#### Why is inclusivity important to you?

We each feel strongly as a group about the importance of inclusivity. I am the primary owner and a Hispanic female. I thought it was very important to bring on like-minded partners that would help me reach my goals.

#### How have you practiced inclusivity in your career?

I'm bilingual in Spanish and I seek out opportunities to take care of all ethnicities. I also prefer to have a very diverse staff at my clinic, which would make anyone feel comfortable and accommodated when coming here.

### Why is it important to your business that you include diverse voices and staff?

It's important to have diversity in any business and to provide opportunities to different people with different backgrounds and experiences. This is also what our world looks like today and will continue to look like. People want to come to a place where they feel welcomed and where people look like them or speak their same language.

### How can a company commit itself to becoming more inclusive?

Reach out to communities that may be overlooked. We reach out to all ethnicities and seek out opportunities to help them. Our staff includes several Latinos, Lebanese and a member of the LGBTQ community.

#### How are you different from other medical skin health clinics?

We actively seek specialty training to handle the skin care needs for people of all ethnicities. Everyone that walks into Revive Dermatology Clinic and Spa will feel welcomed by each of us.

# DIVERSITY IS A FACT. EQUITY IS A CHOICE. INCLUSION IS AN ACTION. BELONGING IS AN OUTCOME.

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At IMT Insurance, our motto is "Be Worry Free". At the same time, we recognize that not everyone has the opportunity to live free of worry. There is still work to be done, and IMT is committed to move foward with intentionality to foster an environment where our employees, agents, policyholders and communities truly feel a sense of belonging.

To fully provide a worry free experience, we must all do better to be better.





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### EMBRACING INCLUSION

Tap into these local sources to find organizations that serve Greater Des Moines' diverse communities.

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#### **GENERAL SERVICES**

CultureALL Connects people with resources such as schools, communities and businesses. Programs are about shifting perspective, discovering new concepts and experiencing differences. *cultureall.org* 

Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families Assists those looking for education, job training and career opportunities through workforce services. evelynkdaviscenter.org

Iowa Civil Rights Commission Law enforcement agency that enforces the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965. *icrc.iowa.gov* 

**Iowa Department of Human Services** Focuses on helping Iowans achieve healthy, safe, stable and self-sufficient lives. *dhs.iowa.gov* 

**IowaWORKS** Connects job seekers with employment services. *iowaworks.gov* 

#### Oakridge Neighborhood Creates

pathways to success for adults, children and families by providing housing and education and employment programs. *oakridgeneighborhood.org* 

#### Safe School Certification Program

Advocates for safe school laws to prevent serious safety incidents. safeschoolcertification.org

#### SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Bor Women Association Illuminates the problems and hardships facing the people of South Sudan, particularly women and children. *iowalink.com/ borwomen.org* 

**Creative Visions** Builds stronger lives, families and communities through services centered on self, family and community betterment. *creativevisionsia.org* 

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans Promotes the interests and well-being of Black Iowans. humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/saa

Urban Dreams Provides human-service programs that break down barriers for underserved and underrepresented populations. *urbandreams.org* 

NAACP Iowa-Nebraska State Conference of Branches Works to ensure racial justice, equality and equity for all. *iowanebraskanaacp.org* 

#### SERVING THE ASIAN COMMUNITY

#### Bhutanese Community in Iowa Works

for the religious, charitable and educational welfare and the cultural protection of the Nepali-speaking Bhutanese people. *bhutaniowa.org* 

#### **Chinese Association of Iowa**

Represents the business, economic and community development of the Chinese American community. *iowachinese.us* 

#### **Chinese Cultural Center of America**

Promotes closer cultural and trade relationships between America and China/Pacific-rim Asia. *cccaiowa.org* 

#### Filipino-American Association of Iowa

Promotes and enhances cultural and heritage awareness as well as fellowship among Filipinos. *filamofiowa.org* 

#### India Cultural Association of Central

**Iowa (ICA)** Shares India's secular values and cultural heritage through a variety of activities and programs. *icaiowa.org* 

#### Indo-American Association of Iowa

Focuses on India's culture and heritage through programs, education and other activities. *iaaiowa.org* 

Iowa Asian Alliance Unites Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities by promoting economic growth and broader community development. *iowaasianalliance.com* 



Iowa Chinese Language School Teaches the Chinese language and promotes its culture. www.iowachineseschool.org

Iowa Nepalese Association Preserves, maintains and facilitates identity, heritage, culture and language. *iowanepaleseassociation.org* 

Japan America Society of Iowa Demonstrates traditional drumming, calligraphy and tea ceremonies at schools and other organizations. *japaniowa.org* 

#### Korean Cultural Connection of Iowa

Brings together Korean and American families and individuals from across lowa for cultural exchange, education and friendship. *facebook.com/kcciowa/* 

#### Maharastra Mandal of Iowa

Celebrates traditions and cultures. *sites.google.com/site/mmofiowa* 

Monsoon Asians and Pacific Islanders in Solidarity Serves victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. monsooniowa.org

Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs Serves economic, social and cultural needs of Iowans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/capi

Tai Studies Center Promotes the welfare and well-being of Tai people, and advocates for intercultural understanding and cooperation in the community. *taistudiescenter.org*  Thai Association of Iowa Promotes goodwill through civic engagement and celebrates the Thai spirit and traditions. *thaiassociationiowa.com* 

Vietnamese American Community in Iowa Enriches Vietnamese cultural heritage through education and crosscultural activities. iowaasianalliance.com/vietnamese

### SERVING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Balance Autism Serves the needs of people with autism through a variety of strategies. *balanceautism.org* 

**Candeo** Serves individuals with autism and Asperger's, brain injuries, and mental illness; provides home-based rehabilitation and employment opportunities. *candeoiowa.org* 

**Central Iowa Chapter for Independent Living** Advances independent living through job training, advocacy, transition services and more. *cicil.org* 

ChildServe Improves the health and well-being of children through specialized clinical, home and community-based programs and services. childserve.org

**Community Support Advocates** Helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injury, mental illness and substance abuse. *teamcsa.org* 

**Crest Services** Provides residential services to individuals with mental or developmental disabilities or those with traumatic brain injuries. *crestservices.org*  Easterseals Iowa Supports children and adults with disabilities to promote independence and opportunities. easterseals.com/ia

**Eyerly Ball** Provides comprehensive mental health services, including crisis, outpatient and residential programs. *eyerlyball.org* 

Goodwill of Central Iowa Helps individuals achieve independence through meaningful employment. *dmgoodwill.org* 

Hope Agency Serves children and adults with special needs and their families to increase their quality of life. hopeagencydsm.org

#### Iowa Division of Mental Health and Disability Services Engages in activities that promote a statewide system of high-quality disability-related

**Iowa Home Care** Provides quality and cost-effective home health care while keeping clients out of hospitals and institutions. *iowahomecare.com* 

#### Iowa Office of Persons with

services. dhs.iowa.gov/mhds

**Disabilities** Promotes employment for lowans with disabilities by reducing barriers. *humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/pd* 

#### **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation**

Services Assists individuals in gaining, retaining and advancing in employment. *ivrs.iowa.gov* 

# EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Public transit can be a powerful social and economic equalizer, and DART is deeply committed to providing our diverse customer base with the ability to move around our communities, connecting people to employment, education, childcare, healthcare and other essential services.

This is an important responsibility, and to be successful, we must listen to riders' changing mobility needs, gain perspective on the barriers they face, and help them leverage transit to meet their individual needs.

DART has committed to using principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in doing this work and fulfilling our mission of enriching lives, connecting communities and expanding opportunities.

By embracing DIVERSITY, we're better understanding and serving our riders, our workforce, and our communities.

By fostering EQUITY through policies, practices, and resources, we're encouraging more opportunity for everyone to thrive.

# By creating an environment of INCLUSION, we'll ensure everyone feels valued and respected.



"We have to be intentional and challenge each other to learn, create, and promote awareness around diversity, equity and inclusion not only at home, but also at work and in our communities. DART is creating an environment to do this."

**Risha McGregor and Catlin Curry, co-chairs,** DART Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

We thank DART's member communities for allowing us to play an important role in expanding opportunities for central lowans, and by doing so, working toward a more inclusive and equitable future for us all.

**Elizabeth Presutti,** CEO DART

DART Commission



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**Russ Trimble, Chair** 

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Link Associates Serves individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as their families. *linkassociates.org* 

Mainstream Living Provides housing, medical assistance, employment, counseling, community integration and a variety of other support services. *mainstreamliving.org* 

MindSpring Mental Health Alliance Provides mental health education, support and advocacy. (Formerly NAMI Greater Des Moines.) *namigdm.org* 

**Mosaic** Serves those with mental health needs with a means of independence. *mosaicinfo.org* 

**On With Life** Focuses on the unique and complex needs of brain injury survivors. *onwithlife.org* 

**Optimae LifeServices** Offers health care and human services for individuals with disabilities and mental illness. *optimaelifeservices.com* 

**Progress Industries** Helps people with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing training, tools and resources. *progressindustries.org* 

**REM Iowa** Assists adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other complex challenges through a range of programss. *remiowa.com*  Respite Connection Gives a temporary break for parents or guardians caring for a child or adult with a disability, providing both individual and group respite care. *respiteconnection.com* 

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Central Iowa Serves individuals and their support networks with tools and resources to cope with mental illness, helping Central Iowans through meetings, support groups, courses and referrals. *namicentraliowa.org* 

#### SERVING THE LATINO COMMUNITY

Al Éxito Builds the leadership potential of Latinx youth through college preparation, career development, and civic engagement. *alexitoiowa.org* 

**Iowa Office of Latino Affairs** Serves as an ongoing resource for Iowans of Latino heritage, government agencies, businesses and other entities in the state. *humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/la* 

Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines Focuses on culturally appropriate leadership training for Latina women. *latinaleadershipinitiative.org* 

Latino Center of Iowa Promotes and celebrates culture and fosters connections. *latinocenterofiowa.org* 

Latinos Unidos of Iowa Invests in Latino leaders and organizations via scholarships and small grants. *latinosunidosofiowa.org*  League of United Latin America Citizens of Iowa Supports Latinx civil rights. *Iulaciowa.org* 

L.U.N.A. Empowers, educates and advocates for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse in the Latino community. *lunaiowa.org* 

#### SERVING THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

First Friday Breakfast Club Gathers monthly for breakfast, fellowship and a speaker. *ffbciowa.org* 

Human Rights Campaign Advocates for LGBTQ equality and educates the public about LGBTQ issues. *hrc.org* 

Lambda Legal Achieves civil rights for LGBTQ and those living with HIV through litigation, education and public policy work. *lambdalegal.org* 

Iowa Safe Schools Creates safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments and communities for LGBTQ and allied youths. *iowasafeschools.org* 

**One Iowa** Focuses on improving the lives of LGBTQ Iowans by protecting and advancing equality and inclusiveness through education, improving workplace culture, and increasing access to quality health care. *oneiowa.org* 

**Out Networking** Presents year-round events focused on business, culture, community and philanthropic subjects. *outofboxproductions.com/out.html* 

# ALL ARE WELCOME HERE

Everyone deserves to be embraced for who they are at home, in the community and in health care. We believe in health care equality and a welcoming environment and experience for all. Because you are here to be you. We are here to be your partner in health.



UnityPoint Health - Des Moines has been named a Leader by The Human Rights Campaign Foundation for its work in diversity, inclusion and LGBTQ equality.



unitypoint.org



#### **SERVING NATIVE AMERICANS**

White Eagle Multicultural Pow Wow Brings the community together and celebrates differences through music, dance, food and storytelling. whiteeaglepowwow.com

Iowa Department of Human Rights: Office of Native American Affairs Works with state agencies to serve the needs of Native Americans in participating fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the state. humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/na

#### SERVING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Bureau of Refugee Services Helps refugees who've been in the country for less than 60 months. *dhs.iowa.gov/refugee-services* 

Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Facilitates health exams, job-placement assistance, school enrollment, language classes and bus training during the first three months of resettlement. catholiccharitiesdm.org/ our-services/refugee-resettlement

**EMBARC** Helps refugees through advocacy, education and community development. *embarciowa.org* 

**Iowa International Center** Provides access to educational and cultural resources to Iowans, new Iowans and international visitors. *iowainternationalcenter.org*  Justice for Our Neighbors Provides free or low-cost legal services to vulnerable immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. *njfon.org* 

Lutheran Services in Iowa Offers a wide variety of services and programs for immigrants and refugees of all ages and ethnicities. *Isiowa.org* 

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Protects the rights and addresses the needs of people in forced or voluntary migration situations. *refugees.org* 

#### SERVING VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS

Home Base Iowa Connects Iowa businesses with qualified veterans and their spouses looking for career opportunities. *homebaseiowa.gov* 

**Iowa American Legion** Offers a variety of programs and services for veterans and their families. *ialegion.org* 

**Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs** Advocates for Iowa veterans and their families, dedicated to ensuring veterans, their dependents and survivors receive full benefits. *va.iowa.gov* 

**Iowa VFW** Seeks to better the lives of all veterans. *iowavfw.org* 

VA Central Iowa Health Care Provides acute and specialized medical and surgical services, substance abuse treatment, and a range of mental health and long-term care services. *centraliowa.va.gov* 

#### **Veteran Employment Services**

Connects veterans and transitioning service members to career opportunities. *iowaworkforce development.gov/ veteran-employment-services* 

#### **RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Feeds, assists and nurtures the needs of vulnerable populations, working with more than 125 member congregations from five faith traditions. *dmreligious.org* 

Hindu Temple & Cultural Center of lowa Follows Vedic traditions and rituals practiced in India for over 2,000 years. *iowatemple.org* 

Islamic Center of Des Moines Serves Muslims in the metro area. islamiccenterdm.com

Jewish Federation of Greater

**Des Moines** Enriches Jewish lives through connection, education and compassion, supporting a number of organizations and synagogues. *jewishdesmoines.org* 

Muslim Community Organization/ Masjid An-Noor Conducts Jumaah, daily and Taraweeh prayers. *dmmco.org* 

#### Sikhs of Iowa Khalsa Heritage Inc.

Promotes ideals of Sikhism, learning of the Punjabi language and the establishment of a community kitchen. facebook.com/Sikhinc

Wat Lao Buddhavath of Iowa Shares the Buddhist traditions of wisdom, morality and concentration. Their main study is Theravada Buddhism. dsmwatlao.org ■

Diversity and inclusivity are important to Belin McCormick. We recognize, respect and value differences among our employees, clients and communities. We are dedicated to attracting smart, talented people from diverse backgrounds at every level of our firm to meet the needs of our clients, suppliers and other key partners in the diverse Community we serve. We firmly believe that a law firm with a diverse workforce of attorneys and staff enhances our ability to be creative problem solvers.

# Creating a Culture of Diverse Problem Solvers

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Greater Des Moines Partnership Inclusion Award, 2020 Capital City Pride Company of the Year in 2018 and 2019 Certified Gender Fair

# TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER

Here at Prairie Meadows our core values of Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, and Excellence ring true in our commitment to diversity. Prairie Meadows' success is driven by the passion, talent, and unique abilities of our employees – representing more than 20 countries and speaking more than 20 languages.





prairiemeadows.com Altoona, IA

### MICHELE MATT

CERTIFIED SPEAKING PROFESSIONAL

CERTIFIED VIRTUAL PRESENTER



Why is inclusivity important to you?

Remember high school cliques? I experienced being excluded for years until I broke through the pressure of conforming to fit in. Ever since, I've made it a priority to reach out and allow all persons to have a voice...their VOICE in life!

#### How can a company become more inclusive?

For the past 30 years of owning my consulting company, Inspiring Solutions, I have inspired leaders and teams to find their VOICE through seven qualities of an inclusive culture:

- **Clarity** everyone understands the purpose of their job, department, and company.
- Code everyone feels valued, trusted, and respected.
- **Creativity** everyone is encouraged to solve problems and implement new ideas.
- **Consistency** every person, policy, and procedure are consistently managed.
- **Coaching** everyone is given appropriate education, tools, and redirection to grow in their job.
- **Conflict** managed in a timely constructive and productive manner.
- Celebration time and money are invested to recognize individual, team and company success.

#### How can others become more inclusive?

LEARN. It is a new workplace, and it is constantly reinventing and redefining itself. Since the pandemic, companies can no longer use old best practices to survive and thrive as they once did. This is the perfect opportunity for businesses to learn from each employee. Give them a VOICE. Ask questions. Listen. Learn. Evolve.

#### Anything else you'd like to include?

Last year, we merged with JER HR Group to offer clients more comprehensive HR consulting services. To help our clients navigate out of the pandemic, I have recently created a Culture Index Survey Process to measure the seven qualities of a collaborative culture. Different from an employee satisfaction survey, this tool measures inclusivity, engagement, and loyalty. Together we can provide every employee of a company a VOICE to share their thoughts, ideas and recommendations to improve the dynamics within the culture.



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# EMBRACING A CULTURE FOR ALL

Nationwide<sup>®</sup> believes in creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture where every voice is heard, every voice contributes and our differences are valued. We're committed to living our values of trust and respect, ensuring equal access to opportunities for all, and being a catalyst for change in our communities.

Nationwide is on your side.®

nationwide.com/diversity



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# Legendary company *new voices and ideas*

Johane Domersant is passionate about celebrating diversity in all forms because she knows what makes us different makes us stronger. As the new John Deere Global Director, Talent Supply & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Johane will further enhance our legendary company by helping to cultivate a culture where diverse voices thrive, equity is championed, and inclusivity flourishes so every employee can fully contribute as their true selves. At Deere, we are committed to driving sustainable change because we know that when we run together, we can ensure life leaps forward for everyone.

Deere.com/Diversity