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Learn about senior life solutions

KIDS AND FINE ARTS

Jerry Wilson makes real world
connections with art

MAPLE HILL & A JAMES GANG STORY

Look back at Maple Hill's heyday

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FEBRUARY 2023



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Compassion FROM A FRIEND WHO CARES



Murphy, the therapy dog at Champion State of Mind, offers a shoulder and snuggles to people in difficult times of their lives

By **AMY H. PETERSON**
STAFF WRITER

When Murphy, the black Labrador retriever, was just a pup, he went to school to become a post-traumatic stress disorder service dog for veterans. His gift of people skills led him astray as he would complete two or three of four required tasks, but by the fourth would find someone he had to meet or greet and scamper over to say hello.

Trainers at the Puppy Jake Foundation in

Urbandale had to flunk Murphy, but he found his way to Amanda Olson, who'd been hoping to re-career a dog into animal-assisted therapy. The Estherville News took a moment with Murphy and he shared his thoughts on the compassion he shows in simple acts with therapy clients, translated through Olson, his human handler.

Q: What are the traits of a good therapy dog?

A: Intuition. In session, if someone becomes emotional, or if they start crying, Murphy is really

“
HE'S NOT TOO INTERESTED IN OTHER DOGS, OR IN PLAYING FETCH OR TUG OF WAR. THEY DIDN'T TRAIN HIM TO PLAY, AND I THINK THAT'S INTERESTING. HE IS A PEOPLE DOG.

-AMANDA OLSON

”

good at sensing that. He can be very in tune to people. The more he gets to know clients, he will recognize their voice. I've had a family that I would work with whom he got to know so well that I swear he could smell them before I even knew they were here, and he was so happy to see them. One big quality is that he is very calm. A lot of people love having Murphy at therapy. People are nervous about opening up, and he's a fantastic icebreaker. They love on him and it really helps break down that barrier.

Q: What does Murphy like to do for fun?

A: He likes to go home

and to be a kid. He loves to find droppings of food that his human siblings drop, he loves to run outside, to watch out windows for the squirrels. One thing he doesn't do well is play. He loves to work, loves to be with people. He's not too interested in other dogs, or in playing fetch or tug of war. They didn't train him to play, and I think that's interesting. He is a people dog. If it has been two days and we haven't left the house, he feels short of attention, and he likes to find ways to get my attention – things he knows he is supposed to do.

Q: Behavior is communication?

A: Absolutely. But the clients love him. They bring Murphy treats. They never bring me



MURPHY & AMANDA OLSON DRESSED FOR A ROARING 20'S PARTY IN 2021.

treats [note – Olson is not requesting treats from her therapy clients nor anyone else.] Murphy has happy toes. If he gets a treat, or wants to get a treat, you'll see his feet wiggle, so I call them happy toes. It's pretty cute.

After a few minutes of sitting on the couch for his interview, Murphy retreated to his fluffy dog bed in the office, and turned around to peek out the window.

Q: What do humans say about Murphy's impact on them?

A: We had a client say they missed being in the office versus telehealth. Because of the weather we switch back and forth. The client said, "I want to get back to

the office because I miss Murphy." Or if a client is on telehealth, they'll say, "Hey, where's Murphy?" and I'll change my screen to show them. They love him. They say they miss him if he's not here for some reason or ask how he's doing if I run into a client or past client somewhere. If I post a photo on Facebook, of Murphy, he gets a lot of followers or people who will respond about him.

Q: Animal-assisted therapy has also made an impact, correct?

A: Absolutely. Here in our office we have other dogs that will come in as well, but he's definitely our king and he's been here the longest.

Murphy sees clients at Champion State of Mind in Estherville, sharing a schedule with Olson. 🐾





From Senior Life Solutions at Avera Holy Family Hospital, Estherville

By **AMY H. PETERSON**
STAFF WRITER

Can you imagine a world where you can succeed by being nice, where we all pay it forward? When people look out for each other, it all starts with an act, according to the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. We can! In honor of National Random Acts of Kindness Day (Feb. 17) and Random Acts of Kindness Week (Feb. 12-18, 2023) Avera Holy Family Hospital’s Senior Life Solutions program would like to share some interesting facts about kindness and its impact

on the mind and body, and also some examples of how you can be kind to the older adults in your life.

What is kindness? According to the Mental Health Foundation, “Kindness is defined as doing something towards yourself and others, motivated by a genuine desire to make a positive difference. We know from the research that kindness and our mental health are deeply connected. The research chows that kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging.”

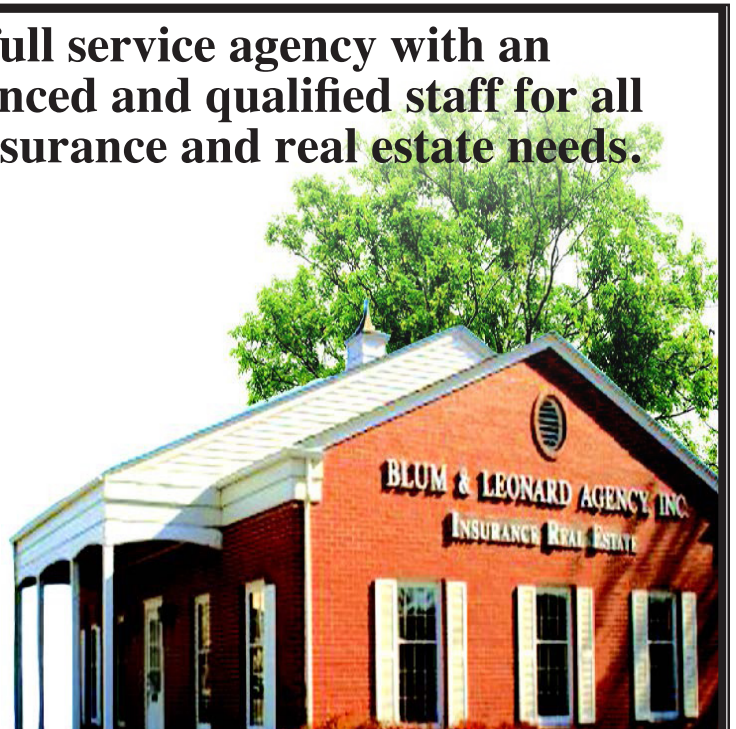
Is kindness good for the body? Yes! “Kindness

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has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy, and compassion and improve mood. It can decrease blood pressure and cortisol, a stress hormone that directly impacts stress levels. Kindness can increase your sense of connectivity with others, which can directly impact loneliness, improve low mood, and enhance relationships in general. It can also be contagious. Looking for ways to show kindness can give you a focus activity, especially if you tend to be anxious or stressed in some social situations,” according to Steve Siegle, a counselor writing for Mayo Clinic’s “Hometown Health” newsletter.

Is kindness something

good for the mind? Yes! Sandi Schwarts wrote for Ripple Kindness:

actually changes when we do something nice for another person. Studies

watching, or practicing kindness stimulates the vagus nerve, which is linked to the production of oxytocin in our brains. Oxytocin is a hormone that soothes us, making us feel calmer and happier. Kindness also triggers the production of dopamine, the hormone responsible for positive emotions and that “natural high” feeling we get. As a result, we experience positive health changes, including a decrease in stress and anxiety, feeling less lonely, fewer aches and pains, increased life expectancy, less depression, and a stronger immune system.”

Here are some acts of kindness that will make a difference in the lives of

“**OXYTOCIN IS A HORMONE THAT SOOTHES US, MAKING US FEEL CALMER AND HAPPIER.**”
-SANDI SCHWARTS”

“Our brain chemistry

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older adults:

- Write a letter
- Help with a chore
- Call just to say hello
- Bake a treat and deliver it personally
- Offer to take their dog for a walk
- Bring them a flower or plant
- Offer to keep them company (activities could include watching a movie, playing a game, or

looking at photo albums)

- Prepare their favorite meal and enjoy it with them
- Bring them coffee
- Tell them what they mean to you

We hope you have been inspired to participate this year in National Random Acts of Kindness Day (Feb. 17) and Random Acts of Kindness Week (Feb. 12-18, 2023). Remember,

social support is research-backed and plays an important role in people's well-being as they age. So, take some time to be kind to the older adults in your community!

Avera Holy Family Hospital's Senior Life Solutions Program is committed to providing excellent care to the older adults in the community. We are available to answer questions about

mental health, provide educational presentations, or provide general mental health information. We also work with other professionals to provide education on mental health and the specific challenges of aging. Please call us at 712-362-6570 if you would like more information or to discuss support for yourself or a loved one. ●

WINTER SNAPSHOTS





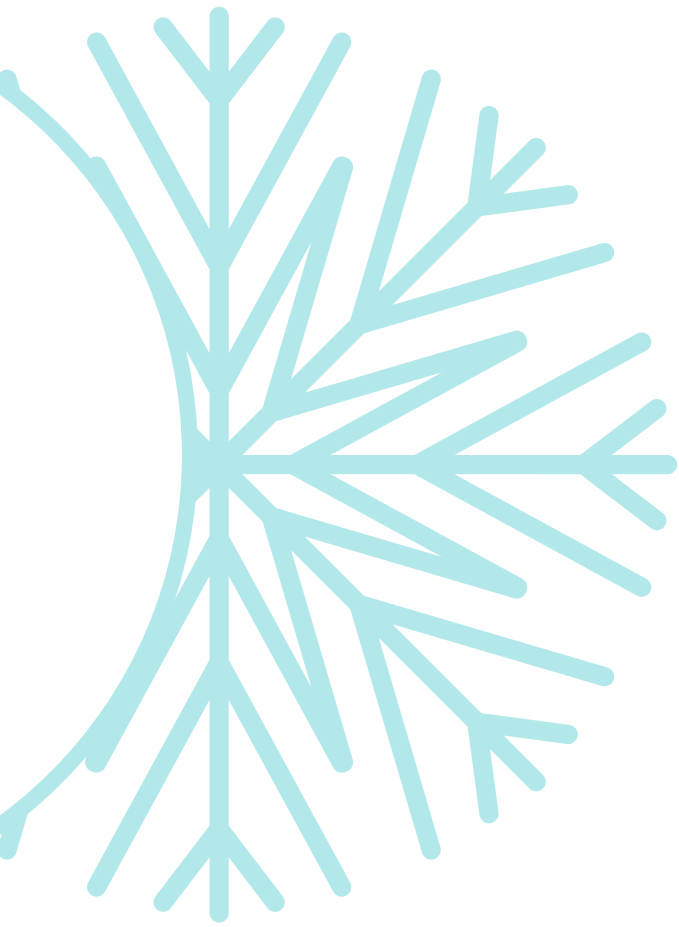


Winter has come early and often to Emmet County, and we caught many youngsters and those young at heart enjoying the snow and crisp temperatures.

While it can seem like the cold weather persists, it's officially the halfway mark between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Our next edition of Our Hometown will come to you in April. We hope to be celebrating spring by then.

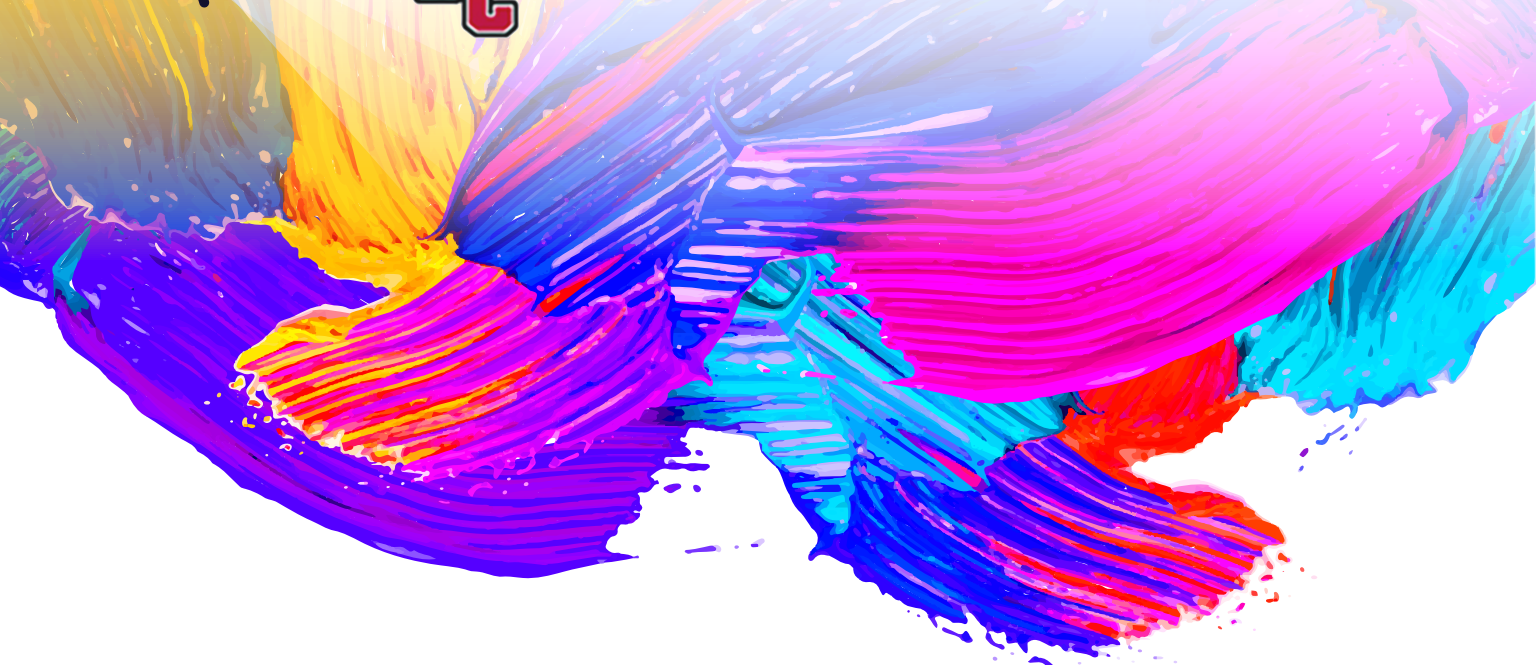
For now, we hope to see more of you outside, experiencing the current, cool moment.







SPOTLIGHT



FINE ARTS TRANSFER TO REAL-LIFE SKILLS AT ELC

Estherville Lincoln Central students are immersed in fine arts thanks to the district's discipline-based art education program.

The program teaches students about the tools and techniques used across a variety of disciplines, such as drawing, painting, and sculpting. Students acquire an understanding and appreciation of the artist profession, while also learning about the creative problem solving process.

ELC students come to

understand that the process of creating art is just as valuable as the art itself.

"I teach that the process is the most important part of a project," says Jerry Wilson, ELC Middle School art teacher of 24 years. "That is where creative problem solving and brain development takes place. I believe that I teach my students important life skills that go beyond education and application in visual arts."

Wilson helps students understand employability skills and real-world industry standards, empha-

sizing key traits employers seek and the possible career paths an artist can take. He also covers the correlation between visuals and marketing.

"Signage and symbols are one of the ways we communicate with one another," he says. "It is to our advantage to understand this form of communication and apply it in a digital age."

To make the program as immersive as possible, ELC ensures students do more than create in the classroom. They are encouraged to create art

on their own, with art kits available for checkout. The kits include a mixed media pad, a set of 72 colored pencils, a "how to draw" book, and a colored pencil sharpener. The district's choice to make art class mobile allows students to foster their love for art at any time, even at home.

In addition to the kits, ELC offers a real-world collaborative program for Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. For the seventh year, middle school art students are partnering with the Estherville

ELC also offers an artist-in-residence opportunity to add to the in-class experience, through which professional artists visit the classroom and guide students through projects.

Hy-Vee Floral Department and Department Manager Vicki Alvarez to create Valentine's Day and Mother's Day posters.

During the school day, the art program encourages students to take pride in their creativity by offering two art display cases. One case is for two-dimensional art and the other is for three-dimensional pieces.

ELC also offers an artist-in-residence opportunity to add to the in-class experience, through which professional artists visit the classroom and guide students through projects. These visits bring variety to the program and provide students with real-life examples of careers in art. A children's book author, a musician, a painter, a

collage artist, a printmaker, an installation artist, a sculptor, a writer, and a puppeteer have all served as artists-in-residence.

"We look to support our students across all their interests," said Tara Paul, ELC Superintendent.

"We value self-expression and creativity, and we believe that our art program fosters these traits in our students. On behalf of the district, I would like to thank all our art teachers for the hard work they put in to give our students the best experience possible in the arts."

For more information on ELC's fine arts program, visit www.estherville.k12.ia.us/community/patrons-of-the-fine-arts.



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ELC SPOTLIGHT

VALENTINE'S DAY ART

from Mr. Wilson's Middle School Students





Photos taken February of 2022





MAPLE HILL HAD CHECKERED PAST

*Legendary James Gang may - or may not -
have visited town*

It is rumored by older residents of Maple Hill that the notorious outlaws, Jessie and Frank James and their game, made a stop in Swan Lake Township.

The story says that the James Gang made their stop in Emmet County on their way home after robbing a bank in Mankato, Minn. The gang, wanting to remain inconspicuous, hid their horses on an island in the middle of Swan Lake.

A resident of the Maple Hill area, Bud Rezac, said when he was a kid in the 1920s a couple of friends took him to the island to hunt rats. They told him the story and showed him the area where the gang had hidden out. Rezac's friend told him that there was

at one time a cave on the island, and that's where they stayed.

No one knows for sure how long the gang stayed in the area, but a long-time resident of Maple Hill, Mrs. Grace Sanborn, said her father told her the story when she was very young. She said that one of the members of the gang had come to the house for some food. Not knowing who they were, Sanborn said her father gave the man one dollar for food. She remembers her father saying that he "thought the James boys were very nice."

Sanborn said in those days it was common practice to give wanderers a meal, or the means to get the meal.

Whether or not it was truly the James Gang

that passed through Maple Hill is still a mystery.

The town of Maple Hill was platted in 1899. It is located in the eastern part of Swan Lake Township on the Estherville and Albert Lea line of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, 13 miles east of Estherville.

B.F. Robinson, a banker in Armstrong, established Maple Hill as a

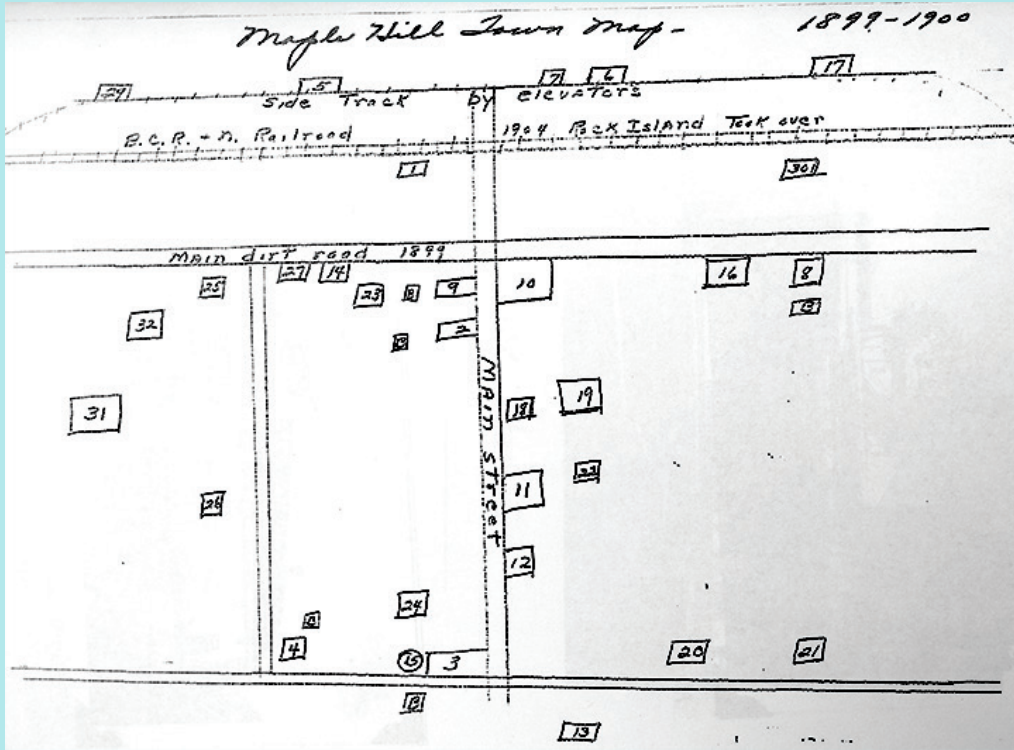
financial venture. A few years later his son-in-law joined him as a manager of the project.

Three businesses were established and several homes were built to attract families to the area, under the name of the Maple Hill Mercantile Company. A grain elevator, lumber yard, and a general store were the first businesses operated by the company.

The Presbyterian church,

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This story was printed in the Aug. 24, 1991 edition of the Estherville Daily News and written by staff writer Greg Nath.



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founded in 1894, stood at the east edge of the town. And in 1915, during the school consideration program, Maple Hill was chosen as a site for a new school.

Rezac said the residents of Swan Lake Township agreed to put the school in a central location. He said at that time students would have to walk to school sometimes and a central location made it easier.

However, a problem occurred. Land was

donated that was located inside Maple Hill. The west side of the township became enraged with the proposed location.

Maple Hill was very happy with the idea of building the school inside the town, because they thought it would be very good for the town.

So it was decided that

the school would be built in Maple Hill, and the respective school districts in Swan Lake Township could vote on whether or not to join the school.

The west side of the township voted to remain independent. They held to their decision until school was consolidated with the Gruver school.

Life in Maple Hill
A resident of Maple Hill, Leonard Swartz, said that in those days the general stores had everything from clothes and nails to grain. He said the General Store in Maple Hill was also the bank and the post office. "When they said general store they meant 'general,'" he added.

Another life-time resident of Maple Hill Leo Sevold said the bank in town was unsuccessfully robbed

“ WE LIVED RIGHT NEXT DOOR TO THE STORE. THE FIRST TIME IT WAS ROBBED, WE WERE ON VACATION, BUT THE SECOND TIME WE WERE AT HOME. WE WERE REALLY SCARED.

-LEO SEVOLD ”





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THE MAPLE HILL 5TH AND 6TH GRADE CLASS IN 1937 included, front from left, Dorothy Haisman, Velma Jespersen, Fern McKean, Margaret Vandewall, Evelyn Archer, Irene Ramsey, Jenny Isler, Mary Simpson, Ardyce Yackle; second row: Francis Vandal, Leonard Swartz, John Nelson, Miss Baker, Albert Swartz, Lloyd Hansen.



three times.

“We lived right next door to the store. The first time it was robbed, we were on vacation, but the second time we were at home. We were really scared,” Sevold said.

Sevold said all three times they tried to rob the store they would cut the telegraph lines and the telephone lines. The store-bank had a safe and the bank robbers would

try to blow it.

Sevold added that all three times they failed to crack the safe. “One time they blew the safe door completely off out into the street,” he added.

Sevold said the bank robbers failed to get any money and escaped the law each time.

Sevold said the sheriff, Tom Nevison, reported that one of the bank robbers got caught doing

another crime, and the robber said the Maple Hill safe was the strongest he had ever encountered.

Mrs. Grace Sanborn said in those days the Maple Hill area was very community minded. In the 1910s, residents would go on rabbit hunts. They would bring back their prizes and donate them to the needy. She said this was

a common occurrence in that time.

Swartz said the American Legion became very active after World War I. “They would hold money raising dinners and ice cream socials to raise money,” he added.

Swartz and Rezac said in the 1930s, Wednesday and Saturday nights were big town nights. The stores stayed open

later. "Those nights were big for business," Rezac said.

Life in Maple Hill basically revolved

around the railroad. All the businesses in town provided some service to the railroads. Swartz said the last hurrah of Maple

Hill was in 1946 when Beauman built a lumber company in Maple Hill, which was eventually moved to Estherville.

"That was Maple Hill's last thing. It went downhill after that," Swartz said.



Train crash one mile east of Maple Hill in July of 1938

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4 p.m. Estherville Lincoln Central Dance
Team Showcase at ELC High School gym

MONDAY, MARCH 20

11 a.m. Wesley's Kitchen - free meal at the
United Methodist Church, 102 S. 8th St., Estherville

MARCH 3-4

4-8 p.m., Friday; 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday
Estherville Farm Home and Living
Show at Regional Wellness Center

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

7 p.m. Patrons of the Fine Arts Coffee
House at ELC High School

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

7 p.m. Estherville Lincoln Central Choral
Pops Concert at ELC High School

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

6 p.m. Estherville Lincoln Central 3rd grade
spring concert at Demoney Elementary gym
7 p.m. Estherville Lincoln Central 4th grade
spring concert at Demoney Elementary gym

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

5-7 p.m. United Methodist Church Pancake
Supper, 102 S. 8th St., Estherville



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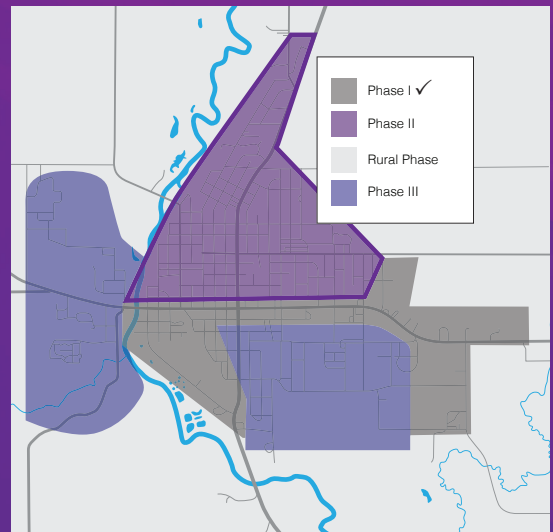
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AT ELC, WE BELIEVE:

- All students deserve teachers and staff who thrive on student success.
- Each student will have fair and equitable opportunities for quality instruction and academic success.
- All students learn when their individual needs are met through personalized school experiences.
- Highly skilled and committed personnel are our greatest asset.
- Quality education is a partnership of students, staff, family, and community engagement.
- Dedication to acknowledging, affirming, and including diversity enriches the educational experiences for all.
- District resources, programs and staff are flexible, adaptable, and provide choice to meet the changing needs of all students.
- A well-educated community is the foundation of our democracy.

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