

Local family seeks to raise funds for rare disease research

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Any parent worth their salt would likely wish for their child to be born healthy and with no complications. Unfortunately, this is a wish that does not always come true, no matter how well-prepared you think you are or how careful you are.

For the Richardson family, the birth of their daughter went from a joyous occasion to a maelstrom of uncertainty when the baby suffered a metabolic stroke at birth. A metabolic stroke is a condition that results from an underlying metabolic disorder reacting to a stressor—in this case, the baby was suffering from glutaric aciduria type 1 (GA1).

GA1 is a rare hereditary disorder caused by a deficiency of the mitochondrial enzyme glutaryl-CoA dehydrogenase (GCDH)—in other words, little Emerald Richardson was born with a metabolic disorder that results in her body not producing the enzymes needed to break down proteins. Due

to the condition, anything from a high protein diet to a simple illness could spell disaster for her health; the metabolic stroke Emerald suffered at birth has already left her facing multiple challenges due to damage to her basal ganglia.

Thanks to early intervention, Emerald has been able to largely recover from her rough start to life, though she continues to struggle with dystonia, macrocephaly, and developmental delays. Today, at almost two years old, Emerald is “doing really good,” according to her mother, Maranda Richardson.

The Richardson family relocated to the Wonewoc area from Arkansas following Emerald’s birth in order to access more specialized care for their daughter, doctoring through the University Hospital in Madison. They picked Wonewoc because they already had some friends in the local community, and the hour or so drive down to Madison was doable.

As Emerald’s condition is rare, advocacy for the disorder is limited, and fundraising efforts to support research and treatment development are few and far between. Having attended other fundraising events in support of various diseases and disorders, Richardson decided she wanted to try her hand at holding an event to help raise funds for GA1 research.

Recently, researchers have been developing a new treatment method that would help improve Emerald’s quality of life, as well as the quality of life for others with the GA1 disorder. Trials in mice have proven successful, and research is moving into the human testing phase. Donations to help fund such research could help give Emerald, and others like her, a new lease on life.

Due to the limitations GA1 places on Emerald, the event will be a relatively short one, only taking about two hours. Richardson has partnered with R&S Spirits in Wonewoc, which will serve as the event host. The event will take

place on Sunday, February 23, beginning at noon over at R&S Spirits. A southern-style pulled pork meal with macaroni salad, potato salad, and Lays chips will be served for a donation of any amount. A vegetarian pizza option will be available for Emerald, and other GA1 friends.

In addition to the meal, there will be a silent auction to help raise money to support GA1 research, along with a 5-/50 raffle. Those interested in donating items for the silent auction can drop off their donations at R&S Spirits by Tuesday, February 18.

The Richardsons also encourage those who plan to attend the event to wear black and white, matching the awareness ribbon colors for rare diseases. All proceeds collected by the event will be donated to the Organic Acidemia Association, a nonprofit focused on advocating for early intervention and supporting research efforts to further understand and better treat metabolic conditions such as GA1.



Emerald Richardson was born with a rare hereditary metabolic disorder, one that impacts her body’s ability to produce the enzymes necessary to break down proteins. As a result, anything from a high protein meal to a minor illness could put her at risk of complications, such as brain damage. To help raise awareness about her disorder, and raise some funds in support of research into the condition, the Richardson family will be hosting an event on Sunday, February 23, over at R&S Spirits in Wonewoc. Contributed photo.

Snow and Glow Wellness Fair set for February 22

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

The La Valle Community Center is a non-profit that has decided to focus their community-centered efforts on programming that seeks to promote optimal emotional and physical wellbeing. The center aims to meet these goals by offering a variety of different events, classes, and other gathering opportunities that provide attendees with a chance to learn a new skill, explore a new hobby, or just meet new people.

Back in September, the organization began to plan for a wellness fair, taking inspiration from a wellness fair held in Dutch Hollow back in 2023. Organizers wanted the fair to focus on helping people while promoting mental health awareness. While the Dutch

Hollow wellness fair was held in the spring, organizers at the La Valle Community Center decided to try “embracing the winter season,” as winter is often a time of year when we’re most likely to be on the downswing in terms of our mental wellbeing.

The fair, dubbed the Snow and Glow Wellness Fair, will offer a variety of breakout sessions, a vendor fair, and two keynote speakers, along with other demonstrations, talks, and the like.

The two keynote speakers will be Tom Kidd, a wellness educator with Balanced Wellness Service, and Dr. Gary Chaikan, a psychiatrist with NeuroMind MD LTD. Kidd’s speech will focus on “aging with purpose and passion,” while Dr. Chaikan’s speech is focused on the connection between happiness

and health.

Nine breakout sessions are planned throughout the day, with most presenting at least twice before the day is out. Gatlin Fenwick and Khrystyna Goodman of Blake’s Tinman Memorial Foundation will be offering their presentation, “Bringing Light and Transformation to Mental Health,” three times over the course of the day, and Gundersen St. Joseph’s will be presenting on acupuncture and massage therapy in three different sessions, as well.

Maragret Hewitt, a nutritionist and diabetes educator with Mile Bluff Medical Center, will be presenting on topics related to heart health and nutrition. Mary Emerson, a physical therapist from the Reedsburg Area Medical Clinic will be offering presentations focused

on the neuroscience of chronic pain, and Laura Vinopal of Mauston Professional Hearing Care will be speaking on hearing loss and its impact on our cognitive function as we age.

Another planned session features Tammy Konecke from Mind Body Harmony, with her topic for the day focused on understanding how brain functions in terms of vision, balance, movement, and pain, and how understanding these functions can help us make better and more informed decisions about our self-care efforts. Connie Martin from BrightSpace Cleaning LLC will be presenting on different approaches and strategies to cleaning, while Vicki Braun from UW – Extension Health and Wellbeing program out of Sauk County is expected to present on other health-related

topics.

If you’d rather spend some time moving during a breakout session, belly dance instructor Rhonda Siebecker will be offering introductory belly dance lessons at different points during the day. A local gardener is also expected to be present during the event to speak on potted plants and the science of flowers—perfect for those interested in gardening once winter closes out for the year!

The Snow and Glow Wellness Fair is set to take place on Saturday, February 22, beginning at 8:30A.M. and continuing until 4:00P.M. There is a cost to attend: tickets are \$35 prior to the event date and \$40 at the door. The ticket price includes access to the breakout sessions, the keynote speakers, and meals. A continental breakfast will

be provided on the morning of the event for those attending, as well as a lunch and snacks throughout the day. While tickets can be purchased day-of at the door, organizers encourage those who plan on attending to purchase their tickets ahead of time, so organizers can plan ahead for food.

Chris Chaikan, a key organizer for the event, hopes to see the fair become an annual event in the La Valle community. She has observed some excitement in the local communities regarding the fair, and would like to see the event become a more permanent part of the local events calendar.

Should the weather prove uncooperative on February 22, the fair will be rescheduled to a date in the spring, most likely in May.

Nature-centered therapy available at Nourishing Flora

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, if there’s one good thing that can be said to have come out of the situation, it’s that we as a society began to take mental health more seriously. Efforts to address mental health at different levels have been enacted both locally and throughout the country. Here in the Hillsboro area, local schools have been developing in-house programs aimed at training students in recognizing mental health symptoms and how to care for their own mental health as well as others.

What each person may need to improve or maintain their mental health can vary based on a range of factors, but there’s always something to be said for getting outside and spending some time in nature.

Multiple studies have been conducted over the years that have revealed and highlighted the positive impacts of spending some

time outside on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Humans, for the most part, have done a fantastic job of divorcing ourselves from nature: we live in houses and apartments specifically designed to keep the natural world out, many of us live in towns and cities where natural spaces are often few and far between, and the lion’s share of us aren’t connected to our food supply beyond a trip to the grocery store.

Is it any wonder, then, that our mental health suffers from the lack of time spent out in nature?

Spending some time outside has been shown to be an effective tool in managing stress, with one study indicating that as little as five minutes out in a natural setting can regulate a person’s sympathetic nervous system. Nature-centered therapies can prove effective for people dealing with chronic mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and even post-



Danna Collier poses with her husband in her newly opened office space in Elroy, right next to the Elroy Theatre. Collier offers nature-based therapies and events for both clients and community members. Contributed photo.

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Regular exposure to nature has also been shown to be effective in managing

emotions such as loneliness, irritability, and anger. Stepping outside and taking a moment to smell the roses, as they say, can also improve our

cognitive functions, leading to better memory, greater attention, improved creativity, and better sleep quality.

Danna Collier, a Hillsboro resident with a background in recreational therapy, has been working to provide nature-based therapies to local and area residents for the past two years, beginning her journey in January of 2023. Collier had been working with Trailways Counseling, and wanted to bring her practice into a more local venue, partnering with Meadowlark Community Farm outside of Wonewoc for space to offer gardening-focused therapy.

“I feel there is a lack of mental health support in this area,” says Collier.

Collier’s practice focuses on developing highly individualized therapy plans for her clients. She focuses specifically on mental health issues, and her offerings typically involve a lot of gardening and planting activities. However, her primary goal is to simply get her clients out into nature, so

if gardening isn’t someone’s thing, activities such as going on a short hike or taking a trip to a local park are also possibilities.

Recently, she has been contracted with Juneau County Human Services, offering one-on-one sessions for clients through the county.

While Collier has always wanted to bring her practice closer to home, she hadn’t been looking for any particularly dedicated office space. However, the stars aligned out of the blue when a friend of hers had attended an informal gathering focused on women entrepreneurs, organized by Elroy local Kari Preuss. Preuss had been looking for a woman interested in renting out a building she owned next to the Elroy Theatre. Collier’s friend pointed Preuss in Collier’s direction, and Collier decided to take Preuss up on the offer.

Collier began to rent the small office space at 120

‘NOURISHING FLORA’
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Tai chi program kicks off at Elroy Library

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Angela DeSmith, coordinator for the Foodwise program encompassing Juneau and Adams Counties, had always had an interest in trying tai chi—a Chinese martial art form focused on flowing, slow-motion movements.

Tai chi is built on a series of circular, gentle movements and requires those who practice to keep their muscles loose rather than tense. The martial art form has been commonly used as a form of gentle, meditative exercise for the elderly, the disabled, and those recovering from physical trauma, such as surgery. The practice is easily adaptable and a good way to improve balance, focus, and general wellbeing.

While DeSmith has always had an interest in the practice, she found herself often too busy to try it herself. Luckily, an opportunity became available that would give her the chance to try it out for herself: a grant opportunity through the Foodwise program. She agreed



Tai chi is a meditative martial art form that focuses on gentle, circular movements and helps to improve balance, strength, and flexibility. Studies show that regular tai chi practice can help reduce the risk of falling by as much as 45! Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

to offer the course through the program as a means of further outreach to communities in Juneau and Adams Counties.

As DeSmith has not yet hosted programs in Elroy, she figured this would be an excellent opportunity to change things up. She arranged to run a pilot tai chi program at the Elroy Library, and the group had their first meeting on Monday, February 3. The program saw quite a sizable

response for a community Elroy's size: nearly thirty people attended the first tai chi class on Monday.

The group spent just shy of an hour practicing a few basic movements, which included physical postures and controlled breathing exercises—all with the added bonus of gentle physical movement. The program's goal is to help those who attend improve their strength,

flexibility, and balance. The specific focus of this program is for those with arthritis and those who are susceptible to falls, but anyone who is interested in getting involved is welcome to attend.

The class will be offered every Monday until May 16 at the Elroy Public Library, from 10:15A.M. until 11:00A.M. The class is free to attend.

New childcare facility seeks to break ground this spring

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Following the retirement of Pastor Conrad Prell from the St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hillsboro, the congregation opted to merge with a neighboring congregation—also operating under the St. Paul's name—in Wonewoc. As the merger was being completed, members of the newly-formed congregation opted to approach the City of Hillsboro regarding a potential proposal.

The proposal called for the building of a childcare center within the Hillsboro city limits. Members of the St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church hoped that the venture, should the city approve it, would help to address some of the need for childcare in the Hillsboro and Wonewoc area.

As part of the proposal, the church identified a 2.79-acre parcel of land by Tinkers Bluff as the future site of the center, and included preliminary designs for a facility specific to that lot. After some discussion by the Hillsboro City Council, the city ultimately agreed to approve the proposal.

Under the terms of the agreement, made in the summer of 2021, St. Paul's would be able to purchase the lot for \$5,000 under the stipulation that the center would be built and opened no later than fall of 2023. If such did not come to pass, the lot's price would double to \$10,000. St. Paul's agreed to these terms and set to work looking for funding opportunities.

Unfortunately, securing the funding necessary for such a project proved to be a greater challenge than the church had initially anticipated, and the fall of 2023 came and went with no childcare center having been built. The project seemed to be dead in the water, until a chance conversation back in February of 2024 gave the project a much-needed second wind.

Josh Finch, administrator for the City of Hillsboro, had been in contact with multiple developers to gauge interest in the project, and by summer of 2024, he was able to get a response from Kaliber Properties LLC, who agreed to take the project on. The agreement put Kaliber as the developer and

property owner for the lot and facility, with St. Paul paying rent to the company. This arrangement will continue for the first five years of the facility's operation, at which point St. Paul's will have the opportunity to purchase the facility from Kaliber.

"After years of work by many different people, we are grateful for the opportunity God has provided through this partnership to bring this project to fruition," says Pastor Jacob Limpert, pastor at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

While this agreement was in place by fall of last year, an official announcement on part of the city was made last week, on January 22. The announcement stated that the new facility, once completed, will comprise roughly 5,000 square feet and serve as both a childcare facility and a senior center.

"This is a milestone project for the City of Hillsboro," says Finch, "as it meets two pressing community needs: quality childcare and support for our senior population."

As of last fall, St. Paul's anticipated four classrooms for the facility, each assigned to a

specific age group and staffed by a single teacher with a single aide. In total, the church plans to begin the facility with 33 spots for children between the ages of newborn to four years old. Those 33 spots will likely be divvied up between different age groups, and weekly fees for children enrolled at the facility will be adjusted according to age.

Kaliber Properties LLC plans to break ground on the facility this spring, once weather conditions have improved enough to allow construction efforts. The company has given both St. Paul's and the City of Hillsboro an estimated completion date that would enable the facility to be open and ready to accept children by fall of this year.

Applications for families looking to enroll their children at the facility are expected to go live at some point in either April or May, and are advised to keep an eye on the St. Paul's website for further information. A separate website for the daycare has been planned, and links to the new site, once it goes live, will be posted to the church's website.

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WONEWOC Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 13	W-CHS Girls Basketball Cashton @W-C-no JV,Var 7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 14	HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION VALENTINE'S DAY DINNER SALAD BAR, SOUPS, STEAK, SHRIMP, COD/ DESSERTS 1 p.m. TO 7 p.m. W-C HS BOYS BASKETBALL BANGOR AT W-C 5:45 PM.7 PM. Hillsboro Woman's Civic Club hosts a Valentine's Party at Milestone Senior Living at 2 p.m.
FEBRUARY 15	HS Wrestling Regionals WONEWOC ST. JEROME'S PARISH HALL is having a SPAGHETTI DINNER Fundraiser 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY 16	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. HILLSBORO LIONS BINGO @HILLSBORO FIREMAN'S COMMUNITY CENTER, LUNCH AVAILABLE 11:30 a.m. BINGO 1 p.m. FEBRUARY 17 W-C J.H. Girls Basketball New Lisbon/Necedah at New Lisbon 5:30/6:20 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 18	W-CHS Girls Basketball at Necedah -no JV,Var 7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 20	W-CHS Boys Basketball Tri-County at W-C 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 21	W-CHS Boys Basketball @Cashton 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 22	MS WRESTLING CONFERENCE MEET TBD
FEBRUARY 23	WNEWOC AMERICAN LEGION ITALIAN NIGHT \$10 EAT -IN, CARRY OUT OR LOCAL DELIVERY 12 PM. TO 6 PM.
FEBRUARY 24	HS WRESTLING SECTIONALS
FEBRUARY 25 & 28	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 2	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
MARCH 3	W-CHS Boys Basketball Necedah @W-C 5:45/7 p.m.
MARCH 4,6,8	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION FRIED COD OR SHRIMP DINNER \$15- 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.
MARCH 9	W-CHS Girls Basketball Regionals at W-C
MARCH 10	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 16	HILLSBORO LIONS BINGO at the Hillsboro Fireman's Community Center, lunch available 11:30 a.m. and BINGO 1 p.m.
MARCH 17	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Shane Gesler (back left), a community health educator with Juneau County, paid a visit to the Wonewoc Public Library on Wednesday, January 22, to conduct a CPR training course. The course was offered through the Juneau County Medical Reserve Corps. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

Applications for Habitat homes now open

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

With the environmental review completed and the contracts signed, the City of Hillsboro and Habitat For Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region are ready to begin breaking ground for the first round of the housing development project. The project will see ten new homes built in and around Tinkers Bluff, expanding housing opportunities for those who already live in the Hillsboro community as well as those looking to move into the community.

Three of the ten homes have been specifically ear-marked for Habitat homeowners. These prospective homeowners will be asked to apply for an opportunity at purchasing one of the homes, and will be evaluated based on several criteria.

The criteria includes a prospective homeowner's ability to meet the monthly mortgage payments, their willingness to partner with Habitat through participating in pre-purchase classes and volunteering, and their need for safe, affordable, and healthy housing.

These three homes will not be built until later on in the project, as Habitat for Humanity will need to select three homeowners and those selected will be asked to put in a certain amount of 'sweat equity' into the building of their new homes.

Applications for the three Habitat homes are now live, having launched on Monday, February 3. The applications will remain open until March 31, which is the final day to submit an application for consideration.

"Habitat is thrilled to open the door to homeownership for more families in our community," says Kahya Fox, executive director for Habitat For Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region. "By selecting new homeowners, we aim to provide not just houses, but a foundation for stability, security, and a brighter future, reflecting our continued commitment to ensuring that every family has the chance to thrive in a home of their own."

The homeownership program through Habitat For Humanity focuses on identifying qualified low- to moderate-income individuals or families earning less than 60% of the area median income who are unable to qualify for a conventional loan. Applications applying to purchase a home through this program will be able to work with Habitat For Humanity to find solutions for affording a new home.

Habitat homeowners are expected to make monthly mortgage payments, which are capped at between 28% to 30% of their gross income. These monthly payments include not only the mortgage, but also

insurance and property taxes.

Those who are interested in applying for one of these homes, or would like more information on the housing project in general, are welcome to attend any or all of four upcoming 'Homeowner Expos.' These expos will be hosted at the Hillsboro Public Library, with a virtual Zoom option for those who are unable to make the expos in person. Information on how to access the Zoom option can be found by visiting www.habitatlacrosse.org/events.

The first expo will take place on Saturday, February 22, from 10:00A.M. until noon. The next two will take place on Wednesday, February 26, and Friday, February 28, with both beginning at 4:00P.M. and lasting until 6:00P.M. The final expo is set for Thursday, March 6, from 10:00A.M. until noon. These expos are all free to attend and open to the public. Those who would like to apply for one of the homes can ask any questions they might have about the application process and what they can expect should they be selected.

Applications for these three homes can be found at www.habitatlacrosse.org/homeownership. Prospective applicants can download a copy of the application from the aforementioned site, while those who either can't access a computer or would prefer a hard copy can find hard copies of the application at both the Hillsboro City Hall and the Hillsboro Public Library beginning on Friday, February 7. The Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise will also be happy to assist prospective applicants who would like to access a copy of the application but do not have access to a computer.



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ELROY Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 13	Royall HS Girls Basketball New Lisbon @ Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 14	HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY VALENTINE'S PARTY at Milestone Senior Living, Hillsboro hosted by Hillsboro Woman's Civic Club 2 p.m. Royall HS Boys Basketball @ Brookwood 5:45/7 p.m. Royall MS Girls Basketball @ Royall vs Brookwood & Bangor 5:30 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION VALENTINE'S DINNER \$15 From 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Salad bar, 2 soups, steak, shrimp, cod, potatoes, veggie, desserts
FEBRUARY 15	ST. JEROME'S PARISH SPAGHETTI FUNDRAISER, 528 CENTER ST., WONEWOC, FREE WILL OFFERING 4:30 PM. TO 7:30 PM.
FEBRUARY 16	Hillsboro Lions BINGO at Hillsboro Fireman's Community Center, Lunch available 11:30 a.m. and BINGO at 1 p.m. Wonewoc American Legion Breakfast Buffet 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
FEBRUARY 17	Royall HS Boys Basketball LaFarge @ Royall 5:45/7 p.m. Royall MS Girls Basketball @ Viroqua Vs Royall/Hillsboro 5:30 PM, Wonewoc American Legion Euchre 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 18	Royall HS Boys Basketball North Crawford @ Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 19	Royall MS Girls Basketball @ Cashton 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 20	HILLSBORO AREA CONSIGNMENT AUCTION, S1752 COUNTY RD HH, HILLSBORO, QUESTIONS 608-553-0403 Royall MS Wrestling Conference Meet TBD TBD Royall HS Boys Basketball Bangor @ Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 21	Friends drop in at Hillsboro Public Library 6:30 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION "ITALIAN NIGHT" \$10 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. eat-in, carry out or local Wonewoc delivery
FEBRUARY 22	GRIEF GROUP MEETS AT HILLSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY 5 p.m.
FEBRUARY 23	HS WRESTLING SECTIONALS
FEBRUARY 24	Wonewoc American Legion Breakfast Buffet 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Royall HS Boys Basketball @ Hillsboro 5:45/7 p.m. Wonewoc American Legion Euchre 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 25 & 28	HS GIRLS REGIONALS
FEBRUARY 28	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION FISH OR SHRIMP DINNER \$15 FROM 12 PM. TO 6 PM.
MARCH 2	Wonewoc American Legion Breakfast Buffet 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 3	Hillsboro Lions meet at Hillsboro Fireman's Community Center 6:30 p.m. Wonewoc American Legion Euchre 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
MARCH 4,6,8	HS BOYS BASKETBALL REGIONALS
MARCH 9	Wonewoc American Legion Breakfast Buffet 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 10	Wonewoc American Legion Euchre 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hillsboro Woman's Civic Club meets at Hills Manor 6 p.m. Author "Lindsay Zoeller" speaking on "Busy Parents, Happy Kids".
MARCH 16	HILLSBORO LIONS BINGO AT HILLSBORO FIREMAN'S COMMUNITY CENTER, LUNCH available 11:30 a.m., BINGO 1 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
MARCH 17	HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
APRIL 11	CHILD DEVELOPMENT DAY AT HILLSBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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Registration now open for Girl Scout camping season

Registration is now open for the Badgerland Girl Scout Summer Camp season. All girls are welcome to camp, whether they're current Girl Scouts or new to the organization; membership can be included as part of the nature-packed experience. With financial aid available, this is the perfect opportunity for every girl to discover the transformative power of camp—where she'll build courage, develop independence, and learn new skills in an inspiring environment away from home. Girls leave camp amazed at just how capable and confident they've become.

The camps are packed with opportunities to kayak, hike, cook outdoors, share campfire stories, perform skits, and try target sports. Every camper will learn new skills, earn badges, and make memories that last a lifetime. For those new to overnight camp, two-night programs offer an ideal introduction.

Traditional five-night camps provide more time to dive into trail and water exploration, horse riding, and other outdoor adventures. Families can also enjoy the unique "My Grown-up and I" camp, where girls and their favorite adults share a special weekend of bonding and fun.

"Every summer, we see campers step outside their comfort zones and thrive in ways that transform them," said Lisa Smith, CEO of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Badgerland. "Whether it's mastering a skill, trying something completely new,

Campers attending Girl Scouts Camp at Camp Ehawee in La Crosse County pose for a photo. These camps provide girls with opportunities to explore the great outdoors in a safe and structured environment as well as learn new skills. Contributed photo.

or connecting with nature, camp is a place where courage grows, lifelong friendships are formed, and girls return home braver, more self-assured, and ready to take on new challenges."

For those with specific interests, two specialty camps stand out and offered in partnership with Madison College: CampHERO, which is led by professional first responders from local and area police fire, and EMS departments and enables campers to get hands-on experience with first aid, firefighting, emergency skills, and more; and Camp BUILD, which introduces campers to the building

trades with activities like wiring an electrical outlet and constructing a bench—made possibly by local trades experts who generously volunteer their time and expertise.

A survey of last year's campers show that more than 75% of those who participated in these experiences listed learning a new skill as the highlight of their summer, while more than 90% stated that they cherished the friendships they made as they explored the great outdoors.

With activities ranging from archery and art to STEM and nature exploration, Girl Scout camp is a place where girls discover their passions and gain skills that last a lifetime.

Badgerland camps are hosted at two picturesque locations: Camp Brandenburg in Dane County and Camp Ehawee in La Crosse County. Both sites provide the perfect setting for girls to unplug, recharge, and immerse themselves in nature.

Families are encouraged to register early, as spots fill quickly. To explore camp options, view and download the camp guide, and secure a spot. Financial aid is available to ensure every girl can experience the joy and growth that Girl Scout camp provides.

For more information about Badgerland Summer Camps visit www.gsbadgerland.org or call us at 800.236.2710.

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Mile Bluff Medical Center donates to Mauston Library

Each quarter, employees of Mile Bluff Medical Center select an organization to benefit from their "Casual for a Cause" Fridays.

To generate funds, staff members are invited to wear jeans to work and contribute a donation toward the initiative. Thanks to the generosity of Mile Bluff's staff, the most recent fundraising drive surpassed expectations, raising more than \$1,376.

In January, Mile Bluff proudly donated these funds to Hatch Public Library in Mauston, reinforcing its mission to serve the community and expand valuable resources. "This beautiful building has so much to offer, and we are always looking for ways to enhance what we provide to the community," said Bridget, Director of Hatch Public Library. "We are humbled and excited to receive this donation and grateful to see support



Through generous donations contributed by Mile Bluff employees, the organization was able to present a monetary donation to the Hatch Public Library in Mauston. Contributed photo.

from our community partners," she added.

The medical center saw this opportunity as an important way to help individuals and families continue to have access to the tools they need to connect, learn, and grow. "By supporting the Hatch Public Library, we are helping to ensure lifelong learning opportunities

for our community," said Dara Bartels, Mile Bluff's President and CEO. "We are happy to contribute in this small way and proud to support a resource that benefits so many."

Mile Bluff remains dedicated to supporting the community, extending its impact well beyond the walls of the medical center.



Local artists Rachelle Craig (center right) and Alicia Cosnahan (center left) led an art night workshop at the Wonewoc Public Library on Monday, January 27. The workshop was the first in a monthly series of art nights the pair are looking to establish at the library. Each month will feature a new art form, with January's art night being focused on the art of embroidery. Pictured, Craig takes a few of the workshop's attendees through a basic stitch often used in embroidery. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

Gundersen Health System sets record for bariatric surgeries in 2024

Gundersen Health System is proud to announce a record-breaking achievement in bariatric surgery, performing 303 surgeries in 2024. This milestone reflects a significant increase in awareness and acceptance of bariatric procedures as effective solutions for obesity and related health issues. The growing trend is not only evident at Gundersen but is also mirrored nationally, as more individuals seek surgical options to improve their health and quality of life.

In recent years, Gundersen Health System has seen a steady increase in the number of bariatric surgeries performed, showcasing the effectiveness and growing popularity of these procedures. The statistics for the past five years are as follows: 2024: 303 surgeries; 2023: 247 surgeries; 2022: 240 surgeries; 2021: 241 surgeries; and 2020: 134 surgeries.

This upward trend aligns with national statistics, which indicate that the number of bariatric surgeries performed in the United States has increased significantly over the past decade. According to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), over 250,000 bariatric surgeries were performed in the U.S. in 2021, marking a 30 percent increase from previous years. This surge highlights a growing recognition of the benefits of bariatric surgery as a viable option for long-term weight management and improved health outcomes.

"One often missed benefit for patients after bariatric surgery is decreased use of prescription medications," says Marisa Pruitt, clinical manager, Bariatric Surgeries, Gundersen Health System. "The weight loss and metabolic effect of surgery often result in patients stopping medications and/or decreasing doses of medicines for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes or other medical conditions related to obesity. This is a true blessing for many individuals and can have a positive financial benefit."

Bariatric surgery offers numerous other benefit, including:

Significant weight loss: Patients can expect to lose a substantial amount of weight, often exceeding 50 percent of their excess body weight within the first year post-surgery.

Improved health conditions: Many patients experience remission or improvement in obesity-related conditions such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension and sleep apnea.

Enhanced quality of life: Beyond physical health, bariatric surgery can lead to improved mental well-being, increased mobility and a better overall quality of life.

Lower risk of death: Patients who undergo bariatric surgery

have been shown to live longer than matched groups of patients who do not undergo weight loss surgery.

As part of its commitment to educating the community about bariatric surgery, Gundersen Health System will host a Bariatric Question and Answer session at 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 6, at Gundersen Onalaska Clinic. This session will provide an opportunity for individuals considering bariatric surgery to ask questions, learn about the procedures, and hear from healthcare professionals about

the benefits and risks involved.

To learn more about the upcoming session and to register, please visit gundersenhealth.org/events/life-after-bariatric-surgery-learn-from-those-whove-been-there. This is a valuable opportunity for anyone interested in understanding how bariatric surgery can transform lives and improve health outcomes.

For more information about Gundersen Health System's bariatric program and the services offered, please visit our website.

HILLSBORO Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 13	HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball Brookwood @Hillsboro 5:45/7 p.m.
FEBRUARY 14	HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball @Luther JVR 5:45 p.m. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball @Necedah 5:45/7 p.m. HILLSBORO WOMAN'S CIVIC CLUB hosts VALENTINE'S PARTY at Milestone Senior Living at 2 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION VALENTINE'S DINNER \$15 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Salad bar, 2 soups, steak/shrimp/cod veggie, potatoes/ desserts
FEBRUARY 10-14 FEBRUARY 15	GFWC-WI VIRTUAL WINTER WORKSHOP HILLSBORO HS WRESTLING REGIONALS WONEWOC ST. JEROME'S PARISH is having a Fund Raiser Spaghetti Supper, FREE WILL OFFERING, 4:30 to 7 :30 p.m.
FEBRUARY 16	HILLSBORO LIONS BINGO AT HILLSBORO FIREMAN'S COMMUNITY CENTER, LUNCH AVAILABLE 11:30 a.m. and BINGO 1 p.m. sharp WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
FEBRUARY 17	JH Girls Basketball @Viroqua vs 6:20 Royall & WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 18	HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball Lincoln at Hillsboro JVR 5:45 p.m.
FEBRUARY 19 FEBRUARY 20	HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball @New Lisbon 5:45/7 p.m. HILLSBORO Public Library ADRC Book Club 1 p.m. HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball Wauzeka-Stauben @ Hillsboro 5:45/7 p.m. HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball @Brookwood 5:45/7 p.m. MS WRESTLING CONFERENCE TBD
FEBRUARY 21	BLOOD DRIVE AT GUNDERSEN ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL, HILLSBORO
FEBRUARY 22 FEBRUARY 23	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION "ITALIAN NIGHT" 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. \$10 eat-in, carry out or local Wonewoc delivery HILLSBORO HS WRESTLING SECTIONALS WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
FEBRUARY 24	HILLSBORO HS BOYS BASKETBALL ROYALL @ HILLSBORO 5:45/7 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 25 FEBRUARY 27	HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball Regionals TBD HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball @North Crawford JV 6 p.m. Var 7:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY 28	HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball Regionals TBD WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION Cod or Shrimp Dinner \$15 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.
FEBRUARY 26, 27, 28, MARCH 1 MARCH 1	STATE HS WRESTLING AT THE KOHL CENTER, MADISON HILLSBORO HS Girls Basketball Regional Finals TBD
MARCH 2	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 3	HILLSBORO LIONS meet at Fireman's Community Center 6:30 p.m.
MARCH 9	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. TO 4 p.m. WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION BREAKFAST BUFFET 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MARCH 10	HILLSBORO Woman's Civic Club meets at Hills Manor 6 p.m. Author Lindsay Zoeller speaks On "Busy Parents, Happy Kids"
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MARCH 17	WONEWOC AMERICAN LEGION EUCHRE 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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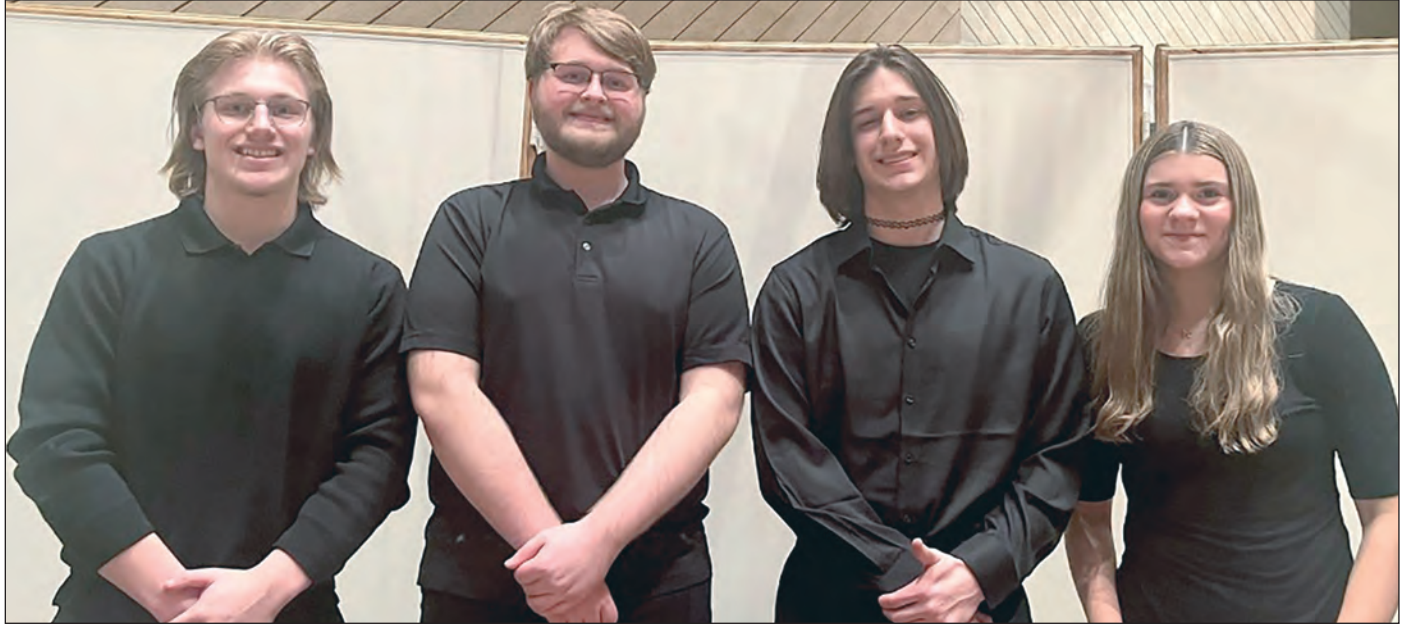
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A total of 850 juniors and seniors from all over the Midwest made their way to Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, to participate in the Dorian Vocal Festival earlier this month. Among them were students from Hillsboro, Wonevov-Center, and Royall School Districts. Pictured: Royall seniors Samson Degner, CJ Anderson, Jude Vlasak, and Maddison Peterson pose for a photo while attending the Dorian Vocal Festival. Contributed photo.

Local music students expand musical skills at area festivals

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Music students at Hillsboro, Royall, and Wonevov-Center began their 2025 year with two opportunities to grow and develop their musical skills. The first event was the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association (WCDA) All-State Choir program, with took place on January 10 and January 11. The second was the Dorian Vocal Festival on January 12 and January 13. For many, it was their first time attending either festival. “I was definitely nervous,” says Addison Ebert, a sophomore at Wonevov-Center, “but I went because Ms. Winkler recommended it and I really, really enjoy singing.” Students at both the middle and high school levels were able to attend the WCDA All-State Choir program, and schools all throughout the state participate in the two-day

musical festival. For Olivia Peesel, a senior at Wonevov-Center, the opportunity to attend was an eye-opening experience, not only in terms of how many people attended but in the passion and energy she and her fellow choral students encountered. “Everyone wanted to be there,” says Peesel, remarking that the experience gave her the opportunity to interact with others just as passionate about music and singing as she was. Camdon Thellefsen, a sophomore at Wonevov-Center, had attended the WCDA All-State Choir program in the past, opting to return again this year due to his positive experiences before. He finds the opportunity to be a great way for students from smaller school districts, such as Wonevov-Center, to encounter other music students and learn from them—and it’s an excellent opportunity for those looking to pursue music after high school.

“I think having such a strong choir program here really does help,” says Thellefsen, who went on to add that good music teachers—such as Leigh Winkler, who teaches music at Wonevov-Center—can further help students looking to build their musical abilities. Over at neighboring Royall, senior Sylvia Rafjako attended for the first and only time. While she had been to other choral festivals in the past, her experiences at All-State were different—primarily, she wasn’t expecting the high level of attendance. As a graduating senior, Rafjako will not be able to attend All-State in the future, though she strongly recommends taking advantage of the opportunity. Isabella Tracey, a sophomore at Royall who has attended All-State in the past, also recommends the opportunity, citing how much confidence her experiences at All-State have inspired in her. The Dorian Vocal Festival, which took place the next day following the conclusion of the WCDA All-State Choir festival, is a bit more selective. Students must be nominated and selected for the opportunity. CJ Anderson, a senior at Royall, was selected for the opportunity and decided to give it a try, as his sister had enjoyed the festival the year prior. Hannah Hill, a senior over at Wonevov-Center, decided to give the festival a try as

it was her last year to do so, and she viewed it as a sort of “last hurrah” for her time with the Wonevov-Center music department. For her, the experience exceeded expectations. “You can feel the vibrations of everyone’s voice through your body,” says Hill. Maddison Peterson, a senior at Royall, also enjoyed the opportunity to work with a large group of music students. For her, the best part of the festival was being able to hear everyone’s voice come together. Not all students participated in both events, but there were a few who did. Locally, Anna Baker, a senior from Wonevov-Center, opted to participate in both festivals, packing her weekend full of music. Baker, who plans to major in art education at UW – Milwaukee next fall, has greatly enjoyed her time as part of the Wonevov-Center choir program. She stated that she would love to do both festivals again, if she could—a sentiment shared by the rest of her cohort. While few of the students who attended either festival from our local school districts is planning for a career in music after high school, all of them had stated that they plan to pursue other musical opportunities moving forward.



The Elroy Legion Auxiliary Quilts of Valor hosted their Annual Sew Day event on Saturday, February 1. As part of the event, volunteers gathered together to work on sewing new quilts that will be awarded to local and area veterans. Photos taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

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Many of the activities Danna Collier uses in her recreational therapy sessions involve attuning one's senses to the nature world. One example is going out and exploring a natural area—such as a park—to locate specific colors in nature. Contributed photo.

NOURISHING FLORA

Continued from Front Page

S Main Street in Elroy back in November, but spent roughly a month getting the space ready for clients. She hosted her official opening back in December, and is excited to have the opportunity for growth a physical office space provides her. For Collier, the goal has always been to get her clients—and the community as a whole—to develop a better understanding of what it’s like to be out in nature, and how therapeutic a little bit of time spent in the great outdoors can be. She has planned to hit the ground running, so to speak, by using her new space to offer a variety of classes and gatherings. The events are designed to provide community members with a better idea of the sort of work Collier does. Some of her events are currently one-offs, such as terrarium-making workshop that has proven so popular an idea that it’s already filled up after just a couple of weeks of putting it out to the public. Others are planned to be reoccurring gatherings, such as a weekly teen night where local youth can stop in and spend some time hanging out and engaging in a variety of fun activities. Moving forward, Collier wants to establish a monthly ‘skill share’ event, where local community members volunteer to teach a skill or talent that they have. Collier has noticed in her work that people want to learn new things, and that some skills can be challenging to learn without someone more experienced to help you through the initial stages. She hopes that community members will volunteer their time and knowledge to help grow the program. If you would like to keep up with Collier’s work, and get up-to-date information on the various events she’s got planned, visit her on Facebook at Nourishing Flora. You can also give Collier a call at (608) 571-7091 or contact her by email at nourishingflora@proton.me. Collier also has a dedicated website for her business: nourishingflora.com.

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