



## Staying safe while serving your needs

With the presence of the coronavirus in Johnson County, here are some basic precautions and reminders:

**Full members:** When requesting a TRAIL volunteer service, please consider your health and the health of other members of your household, as well as the health of our volunteers. If you have a respiratory illness or other virus symptoms, please stay home and wait until you are well before requesting an in-home service. If you are in need of medical assistance, contact your primary care provider. If you are ill and need a home delivery, please call the TRAIL office and we will see how to arrange to accommodate you. Keep hand sanitizer available at your door and ask people to use it. Take your temperature to find out if you have a fever. As always, try to contact the TRAIL office at least one week in advance to make your service request, so we have time to find the volunteer help you need.

**Volunteers:** When filling a member-service request, please consider your health and the health of the TRAIL member. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, carry hand sanitizer with you and use it appropriately, and greet people with a warm smile, not a handshake, hug, or other touch. Please call the TRAIL member whose request you are filling to find out if everyone is well in the household before you depart for your volunteer service. If you have a respiratory illness or other virus symptoms, please stay home. **Thank you for your service during these trying times!**

## A message from the TRAIL Board to the TRAIL Community:

From the beginning, TRAIL has been about bringing our members together and keeping them connected, even as they continue living independently. But now, with the advent of COVID-19, one's independence may feel more isolating than liberating, especially as we anticipate many more weeks of "social distancing."

But distance doesn't have to mean isolation. Although TRAIL has cancelled (for now) our 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Celebration and will likely reschedule many of our upcoming member events, **we pledge to stay in touch and to continue serving our members in as many ways as we can.**

- ◆ **Full members** will be contacted soon about your interest in having a TRAIL volunteer become your "phone buddy" for as long or as often as you would like during the COVID-19 crisis. As usual, Full members should call the TRAIL office for all other volunteer service requests. Also see our tips for member-volunteer interactions at left.
- ◆ For the duration of this crisis, **we are extending our volunteer check-in/friendly-visit phone call service to Affiliate members as well.** At your request, a TRAIL volunteer will call on a regular basis just to chat or see how you're doing.

To request ongoing calls from a TRAIL volunteer, **Affiliate members** should contact TRAIL's Member and Volunteer Coordinator Sue Mellecker at (319) 800-9003 or [membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org](mailto:membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org), from 9 AM to 1 PM, Monday through Friday.

Sue will continue to monitor the TRAIL office phone and email, even though our Senior Center office is closed. Feel free to contact her if you have other questions about TRAIL membership and services. She also may be able to point you toward other community resources, such as meal deliveries and errands.

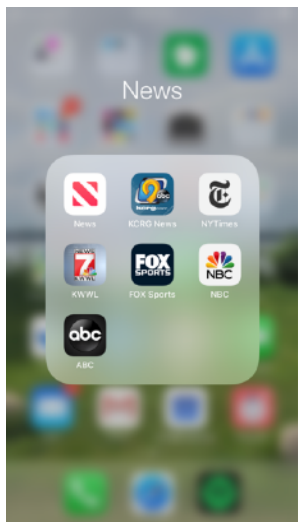
This is a difficult and worrisome time for us all. But remember that one of the most effective ways to reduce stress is to do something kind for others. Check in on your neighbors; send cards and letters to family and friends. And let us know what else TRAIL might do to support your well-being and ease your fears and isolation. The virus may have forced us apart, physically, but we can and will get through this by staying together in spirit.



See page 4 for online sources of COVID-19 information.

## Fake news and how to recognize it

According to the Poynter Institute, older Americans are more likely to consume and share false information than other age groups. Twenty TRAIL members learned how to recognize factual and fake news at a February Living Well presentation led by Lynn Donham, retired professor of library studies. There are many things we can do,



including developing some key habits and asking questions:

- ◆ Open minded: “Yes, but on the other hand . . . “
- ◆ Strategic: “Have I differentiated between fact and commentary?”
- ◆ Investigative: “What more do I need to know?”
- ◆ Skeptical: “Says who? How can I be sure?”
- ◆ Metacognitive: “Did I seek out alternative views, verify facts, check the author’s background?”

Also, be aware of your news source. Newspapers and magazines can skew liberal, mainstream, or conservative. To learn more about your news sources, visit [adfontesmedia.com](http://adfontesmedia.com).

## Volunteer Support

### A member, a match, and a meal

Full member Dennis Horak has nothing but praise for TRAIL, especially its volunteers and the friendships he’s made.

Dennis has requested volunteer support to help him run errands, which volunteer Mark Nidey, among other TRAIL volunteers, has filled recently. Mark and Dennis even attended a Veterans Day breakfast together at Hy-Vee in November.

But errands aside, Dennis gets “pretty weary living alone and eating out of a can most of the time” since he has vision impairments and it’s difficult for him to cook. He mentioned this to Sue Mellecker, TRAIL’s Member and Volunteer Services Coordinator, and said it would be nice if someone would like to have lunch with him at a restaurant. Sue opened a service request to see if a volunteer would be willing to do this.

Enter Allison Andrews, who graduated from the UI with a certificate in aging and longevity studies through the School of Social Work. After graduation, it was hard to find time to volunteer, but with TRAIL she can choose the opportunities that work in her schedule.

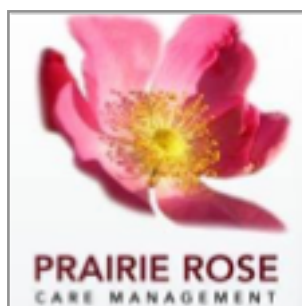


Above, TRAIL member Dennis Horak and TRAIL volunteer Allison Andrews

“I may be one of the younger volunteers with TRAIL,” she says, “and I’ve loved forming some good intergenerational friendships. Having a meal with Dennis was an incredible experience. What seemed to be a simple outing to me meant everything to Dennis. It warmed my heart.”

Being a TRAIL member has changed his life, Dennis says. “Everyone is super nice and great and they’ve all been there for me. Membership means a lot to me. I would be lost without it.”

#### Thanks to our MARCH-APRIL newsletter sponsor



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## CHECK THIS OUT!

MidWestOne Bank has made a very generous \$3,000 donation to help underwrite TRAIL's Supported Membership Program for low-income individuals. Community Engagement Officer Jenny Olson (far right) presented the gift on March 10 to grateful TRAIL representatives (left to right) Bruce Teague and Liz Swanson, Fundraising Committee; Sue Mellecker, Member and Volunteer Services Coordinator; and Susan Shullaw, TRAIL Board chair. Our thanks to MidWestOne!

**More information** on TRAIL's Supported memberships can be found on this page on our website: [trailofjohnsoncounty.org/membership/benefits-fees](http://trailofjohnsoncounty.org/membership/benefits-fees).

## [Don't] hold that thought

Do you have ideas or suggestions for coping with and staying connected during the COVID-19 crisis? Or community resources you'd like others to know about? For TRAIL members, there's a quick and easy way to share information. It's right on our website and it works like so:

- \* On the **TRAIL member website**, click on the **FOR MEMBERS** tab at the on the navigation bar at the top of the page.
- \* From the resulting drop-down menu, click on the last item, **MESSAGE BOARDS**.
- \* That will bring up a page where discussions are organized in these categories: **MEMBERS** and **VOLUNTEERS**. Under the **MEMBERS** category, click on **Member Discussion**. That will display a list of "discussion threads"—including the one at the top, tagged "**COVID-19: Resources, questions, and suggestions.**"
- \* Click on that "COVID-19" text and you will see an initial message from Susan Shullaw, inviting your comments. You will also see a blue **REPLY** button to the right that allows you to add your comments.

Give it a try and let us know how it works for you. We also welcome your input on our member events or any other TRAIL topic. Thank you!

**A note about upcoming events:** As of our publication date, these events are still scheduled to take place. But the situation is evolving rapidly and some or all of these activities may be cancelled at the last minute. If you have registered on the TRAIL website, you will be notified of any cancellations. Otherwise, please keep an eye on our [Calendar page](#) for last-minute changes or call the TRAIL host listed on the event page to confirm.

More details about each event can be found on the TRAIL calendar online.

Please register for any of these member events online or by calling the TRAIL Office at 319-800-9003.

Members pay their own fees if there is a cost associated with an event (\$).

**[Living Well: AARP Homefit Program](#)**

**Tuesday, March 24, 1 to 2 PM**

Home of Lorraine Bowans, 925 Barrington Road, Iowa City

Learn how to make your home attractive and accessible for lifelong living, and hear about exciting new products. Lorraine is a TRAIL member and Certified Aging in Place Specialist with the National Association of Home Builders.

**[TRAIL Book Club](#)**

**Thursday, April 9,**

**1:30 to 3 PM**

Panera at Iowa City Marketplace, 1646 Sycamore Street, Iowa City

**[TRAIL Volunteer Orientation](#)**

**Saturday, April 11, 10 to 11 AM**

Hills Bank, 1401 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

Volunteer drivers are one of TRAIL's greatest needs, but a variety of skills and interests is also needed.

**[Member Happy Hour](#) \$**

**Tuesday, April 14, 4 to 5:30 PM**

Orchard Green, 521 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

**[TRAIL Yarning Group](#)**

**Wednesday, April 15, 1:30 to 3:30 PM**

Home of Margaret Felling, 825 South 7th Avenue, Iowa City

**[Breakfast Road Trip to Kava House](#) \$**

**Friday, April 24, 8 to 10 AM**

Kava House Cafe, 122 2nd Street SE, Swisher

Wonderful breakfast options are available for under \$10. Plenty of parking.



This CDC website is your best and most reliable source of information about the COVID-19 virus: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

For the latest information about the virus in Iowa, see the Iowa Department of Public Health at: <https://idph.iowa.gov/emerging-health-issues/novel-coronavirus>

Here is a list of disinfectants that meet the EPA's criteria for use against the COVID-19 virus: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>