



TRAIL community education series: **Closing the Gap: Healthspan vs. Lifespan**

From Executive Director Christine Scheetz

In last month's column, I talked about Dr. Ken Dychtwald's research and recommendations for how to rethink aging, and this month I am delighted to tell you more about the fall community education series we've lined up for you; it will focus on increasing health and quality of life as we age. As a refresher, the average life expectancy for an American is currently 78.5 years, but the average American is expected to be healthy for only 66 years. The seminar series is designed to address this very issue.



**"Closing the Gap:
Healthspan vs. Lifespan"**
every Thursday in October
1:00 to 2:30 PM
North Liberty Community Center

The series will kick off on October 2 with opening remarks by Jan Jensen, UI Head Women's Basketball Coach, followed by an outstanding presentation by Jan's spouse, Julie Fitzpatrick, DPT, founder and owner of Optimal Wellness, PLLC. Julie's presentation, "Optimal Wellness, A Proactive Approach" will focus on nutrition, activity, social connection, and other issues of lifestyle and building your optimal health team that can promote improvements in health and wellbeing. **Please note, the first session will begin at 12:30 and lunch will be served at October 2 session.** All session topics are listed on the right.

We are grateful to partner with Athletico Physical Therapy for this series and hope you will find value in attending each session. Whether you're looking at specific health issues or ways to build your resilience, this seminar series will deliver!

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OCT. 2

Welcome remarks by Jan Jensen, Head Women's Basketball Coach, University of Iowa

Optimal Wellness: A Proactive Approach
Julie Fitzpatrick, DPT, Optimal Wellness, PLLC

OCT. 9

Partnering with Your Physician for Optimal Health

Scott Eberly, MD, CMD, Geriatric Medicine, University of Iowa Internal Medicine

OCT. 16

Total Joint: Understanding Your Options, What to Expect Before, During, and After Surgery

Dallas Vanorny, MD, PhD, Orthopedic Joint Surgeon, University of Iowa Health Care

OCT. 23

Balance, Strength & Beyond: Aging with Confidence

James Norman, PT, GCS, Athletico Physical Therapy

OCT. 30

From Setback to Comeback: Optimizing Recovery

UI Health Network Rehabilitation Hospital staff

Safety and Independence: Tools to Aid Daily Living

Chris Nichols, CarePro Home Medical

This article was provided by Tracy Sherzer of Featherstone at Hickory Hill, 2025 TRAIL Silver Sponsor.



Choosing an ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

Selecting an assisted living community is a significant decision for individuals and families. The right choice can enhance quality of life, support independence, and provide peace of mind. When evaluating options, it's important to carefully consider several key factors.

Quality of Care

The foundation of any assisted living community is the care provided. Families should ask about staff qualifications, training, and availability. It's also helpful to learn how care plans are developed and updated, as well as how the community manages medications and health monitoring. A community with attentive, well-trained staff can make a meaningful difference in residents' daily well-being.

Safety and Security

Safety is another top priority. Features such as emergency call systems, secure entrances, 24/7 staffing, and fall-prevention measures should be standard. Accessibility—both in private apartments and common areas—ensures that residents can move about safely and confidently.

Lifestyle and Amenities

Assisted living should balance support with a sense of home. Consider whether the environment is comfortable and well-maintained, and review dining options for nutrition and variety. Lifestyle programming, including social activities, exercise, and outings, contributes to engagement and emotional health. Transportation services also help residents remain connected to the larger community.

Culture and Atmosphere

Each community has its own personality, which is best observed during a visit. Families should pay attention to how

staff interact with residents and whether the atmosphere feels welcoming. A warm, respectful culture often translates to higher resident satisfaction and stronger relationships between staff and residents.

Location and Accessibility

The right location can influence overall happiness and family involvement. Proximity to loved ones, hospitals, and familiar neighborhoods makes visits easier and supports ongoing care needs. Accessible transportation for medical appointments or errands also promotes independence.

Costs and Financial Considerations

Assisted living is a long-term investment. Families should request a clear breakdown of costs, including what is covered in the monthly fee and what services incur additional charges. It's also worth asking about payment options, such as long-term care insurance, veterans' benefits, or Medicaid waivers. Transparency in pricing helps avoid unexpected expenses.

Reputation and Compliance

Finally, reputation matters. Families can learn a great deal from online reviews, state inspection reports, and conversations with current residents or their families. Accreditation or recognition from senior living organizations may also indicate a higher standard of care and accountability.

Choosing an assisted living facility is about more than safety and support—it's about finding a place that feels like home while meeting individual needs. By evaluating care quality, safety, lifestyle, costs, and culture, families can make informed decisions that foster comfort, dignity, and peace of mind.

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TRAIL community education series

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It's easy to register for "Closing the Gap: Healthspan vs. Lifespan" by visiting the TRAIL of Johnson County [website calendar](#) or using the QR code below. One registration will provide entrance to all sessions (though if you have to miss one, please go ahead and sign up—we'd love to have your participation in any or all of the sessions). As a reminder, this is a community event (not limited to TRAIL members) so please share this information with your friends, family, and neighbors.



Choosing an assisted living community

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Are you considering a move to assisted living?

Full members have free access to TRAIL's Life Transition Service, which can help you navigate changes in your ability to age in place. Specially trained Life Transition volunteers can assist you and your loved ones with identifying and investigating options for care, housing, and services and provide continuing support through the entire journey.

For more information, contact the TRAIL office at 319-800-9003 or email membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

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TRAIL is grateful for the ongoing support provided by Alec R. Fowler Law P.C. | Fowler Tax.

As the TRAIL Board of Directors begins its strategic planning process to determine the organization's goals for the next three to five years, input from our members, volunteers, donors, and community partners is essential. **Where would YOU like to see TRAIL in the years ahead?**

From your perspective as part of the TRAIL community, how can we address what will surely be a rising demand for our services, while maintaining our volunteer numbers and the financial resources needed to run a robust organization? What other services might we consider offering to our members and/or the community in these uncertain times?

To share your thoughts about TRAIL's future direction and priorities, please take a moment to complete this **online survey**. We will report on our strategic plan outcomes in a *TRAIL Guide* story later this year. *Thank you!*

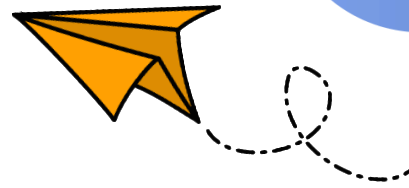
We'd (still) like to hear from you!



Your thoughts and opinions matter and will be gratefully received.



Too good to pass up



TRAIL member Marianne Mason of Iowa City admits that flying a small plane wasn't on her lifetime bucket list. But when she learned during a recent TRAIL tour of the Iowa City

Airport that an hour-long introductory flight lesson was being offered there for just \$100, she thought the opportunity was too good to pass up.

"We all have enough 'stuff' in our lives," she says. "Now I'm interested in gaining new experiences."

Marianne was able to arrange her flight lesson with Jet Air, the company that provides the Iowa City Airport's commercial aviation services. Her instructor was retired UI pediatric gastroenterologist Warren Bishop, an experienced pilot who also serves on the city's Airport Commission.

"Of the hour-long lesson," Marianne says, "we spent most of it going over the long pre-flight checklist and learning about the cockpit controls. There's so much to do before the flight! It was really eye-opening."

Marianne was placed in the pilot's seat ("that surprised me," she says) while Warren handled the take-off. Once they were in the air, Marianne recalls being quite relaxed and enjoying the view of the green fields and rolling hills toward Kalona.

But then Warren gave her control of the small Cessna, urging her to bank left and right, and then to ascend. And suddenly her calm left her.

"I was like a deer in the headlights," she says. "It hit me that here I am, 3,000 feet in the air, and I'm flying a plane! As we began to ascend, all I could see in front of me was blue sky, and I was terrified. I am not a brave person and Warren was very reassuring, but my reaction really shocked me."

After just 15 or 20 minutes in the air ("I lost all track of time," says Marianne), Warren brought the plane in for a landing and Marianne's first flight lesson was over. Although she was glad to be back on the ground, she was equally glad to have had the experience—and she'd do it again.

"The rush stayed with me all day," she says. "I'm grateful to TRAIL for alerting me to this opportunity!"

Tour the airport on Sept. 22

If you missed TRAIL's airport tour last month (which Marianne Mason describes as highly educational), note that public tours of the airport's impressive solar array and more will be offered on Monday, Sept. 22, as part of Iowa City's annual Climate Fest. You'll find complete details on [TRAIL's calendar page](#).



Airport tour

Twelve TRAIL members toured the Iowa City Airport and Maintenance Building on August 15 with Warren Bishop, a flight instructor for Jet Air. It was a fascinating presentation about the history of the airport, the buildings, and the new mural. Additional photos of the tour may be found on [page 6](#).



University of Iowa **STAR Registry** supports research

Research leads to important discoveries that can enhance the quality of our lives, including better ways to prevent, detect, control and treat illnesses. While 17.9% of Iowa's population is over 65, researchers often have difficulty recruiting these participants. To solve this, University of Iowa developed a registry of research volunteers, *Seniors Together in Aging Research (STAR)*, to help connect individuals who are interested in participating in research studies with investigators. Anyone age 50 and older, who is either healthy or has medical issues, is invited to enroll in the STAR Registry.

Once registered, individuals may be contacted by the STAR Registry staff about participating in research studies for which they qualify. Signing up for STAR Registry in no way obligates a person to participate in a research study; participation in research is always voluntary.

As part of volunteer activities, you may contribute by taking a survey, participating in a clinical trial, or sharing opinions with researchers. Research volunteers may not always benefit directly from being in a study, but they may be helping others or future generations. For some studies, compensation is also available.

By taking part, you can make a difference for yourself and future generations. More than 1,500 Iowans are already

participating in STAR and more are always welcome. To learn more about the STAR Registry, visit the website at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/star/, e-mail coa-star@uiowa.edu, or call 319-335-7569.

Recent studies include:

- MOST Joint Health Study (Department of Epidemiology): A study to advance our understanding of osteoarthritis.
- E-Tailored Pain Management Support for Dementia Family Caregivers (College of Nursing): A study of web-based application for pain management.
- Characterizing the Impact of Presbyphonia on Social Interaction (Department of Otolaryngology): A clinical trial on the impact of voice impairment on social interaction.
- Special Focus Facilities (Department of Social Work): Zoom interviews about nursing homes called Special Focus Facilities.



TRAIL's ice cream social was held on August 14 at City Park. The annual event found TRAIL members enjoying ice cream and each other's company. It also gave attendees the chance to meet new members. TRAIL is grateful to Dan and Debbie's Creamery for once again donating the ice cream to this popular event.



Airport tour continued

Page 4 photo (left to right): Betsy Fischer, Warren Bishop, Alfrieta Monagan, Jenean Arnold, Phyllis Black, Dean Logan.

Far left: Betsy Fischer and Vicki Tardy in front of a \$1.5 million plane with its own parachute.

Left (left to right): Alfrieta Monagan, Dwight Tardy, tour guide and flight instructor Warren Bishop, Nancy Sharp, Jan Wielert, Jim Ruebush, Vicki Tardy

People attending but not pictured: Barb Stein and Marianne Mason.



NOTE: Some events are virtual, while others are in person. Full details for each event can be found on [TRAIL's online calendar](#).

New events are frequently added, so check TRAIL's weekly calendar preview emailed on Fridays or the [online calendar](#) to stay up-to-date.

Calendar key: **BLUE** events are for TRAIL members. **GREEN** (virtual) and **YELLOW** (in-person) events are hosted by other groups but may be of interest to TRAIL members.

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

Want to attend an event, but need a ride? Call Jessica at 319-800-9003 or email her at membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

TRAIL Guide is published on or about the 15th of each month by the TRAIL Marketing and Communications Committee for the benefit of TRAIL members, donors, volunteers, and friends. If you have questions or suggestions about the newsletter, email info@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

Upcoming TRAIL Events Calendar

[Natural Grocers Nutrition Talk: Natural Hacks for a Healthy Memory](#)

Wednesday, September 17, 10:30 AM to noon

Natural Grocers, 1404 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

[Line Dancing at Wildwood Smokehouse](#)

Thursday, September 18, 6 to 9 PM

Wildwood Smokehouse, 4919 Walleye Drive SE, Iowa City

[Dine Around Lunch at Mirabito's \\$](#)

Friday, September 19, 11:45 AM to 1 PM

Mirabito's Italian Restaurant, 40 Sugar Lane #1, North Liberty

[Visit to the UI Stanley Museum of Art—New Acquisitions](#)

Wednesday, September 24, 1:30 to 2:30 PM

UI Stanley Museum of Art, 160 West Burlington Street, Iowa City

[Yarning Group](#)

Thursday, September 25, 1 to 3 PM

Vicky Tardy's house

[Coffee Hour \\$](#)

Monday, September 29, 10 to 11:30 AM

Sidekick Coffee & Books, 1310 1/2 Melrose Avenue, Iowa City

[TRAIL Seminar Series—Closing the Gap: Healthspan vs. Lifespan](#)

Thursday, October 2, 12:30 to 2:30 PM (lunch included)

North Liberty Community Center, 520 West Cherry Street, North Liberty

[Cycling Without Age Ride & Info Session](#)

Tuesday, October 7, 10 to 11 AM

Ashton House, 820 Park Road, Iowa City

[Member Happy Hour \\$](#)

Tuesday, October 7, 4:30 to 6:30 PM

Orchard Green, 521 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

[TRAIL Book Club For Men: Monopoly X by Philip Orbanes](#)

Thursday, October 9, 1 to 3:30 PM

Courtyard by Marriott, 901 Melrose Avenue, Iowa City

[TRAIL Seminar Series—Closing the Gap: Healthspan vs. Lifespan](#)

Thursday, October 9, 1 to 2:30 PM

North Liberty Community Center, 520 West Cherry Street, North Liberty

[TRAIL Book Club: Atmosphere by Taylor Jenkins Reid](#) (via Zoom)

Monday, October 20, 1 to 2 PM