



Anniversary event recap: Fellowship, food, and fun

Lively conversation, peals of laughter, and frequent returns to the bountiful food table were among the highlights of TRAIL's 2nd Anniversary Celebration, "Better Together," held on May 16. Scores of TRAIL members, volunteers, donors, and vendors mingled and enjoyed one another's company at the new Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville.

In her introductory remarks, Board of Directors Chair Michelle Buhman shared an organizational snapshot as TRAIL enters its third full year of operation:

- ★ TRAIL now has 206 members, 35 of whom are Full members and the remainder at the Affiliate level.
- ★ Our 40 service volunteers filled 510 member requests in 2018 and have met more than 150 requests so far this year. (Transportation volunteers are still needed—sign up for our next orientation on the TRAIL Calendar page!)
- ★ About 45 additional volunteers are serving on the TRAIL board and board committees; we welcome additional members to these groups as well.
- ★ TRAIL held nearly 100 member events in 2018; we are aiming for an average of 10 to 12 events each month in 2019.

Following Michelle's remarks, local actor and playwright Janet Schlapkohl took center stage and wowed the crowd. Her hilarious monologue about aging in place, complete with sound effects, touched on the invisibility of older women, the perils of living with a large-animal veterinarian, the challenges of dealing with independent-minded parents, and much more.

Our thanks to anniversary event corporate sponsors James Investment Group, Westwinds Real Estate, and Caring Hands & More for supporting this year's celebration and investing in TRAIL's continued success.



Guests congratulate Janet Schlapkohl on her presentation about some of the humorous aspects of aging in place.



TRAIL board chair Michelle Buhman's opening remarks addressed TRAIL's accomplishments to date and its growth plans for the future.

TRAIL events provide opportunities to catch up with friends old and new.



See more anniversary photos on page 2.



One highlight of the event was a surprise presentation of a baby quilt made for Executive Director Hillary Ramaker by the TRAIL Yarning Group. (We will share Ramaker baby news in the June newsletter.)



The food at TRAIL events—prepared by hand by TRAIL volunteers—is always a star of the show!



Our event sponsors included Caring Hands & More, represented by Angela Gardner and Bruce Teague (left and center), and James Investment Group, represented by Jeremy James (right) and Hannah Rapson (not pictured). *Event photos by Tom Langdon.*

A note from Sue Mellecker: Hello TRAIL members! I've just completed my third week as the new Volunteer and Member Services Coordinator for TRAIL and so far, I love it! The TRAIL office is a very BUSY place and you are all keeping me on my toes.

I've jumped into learning the TRAIL computer system so I can enter your requests and sign you up for TRAIL's wonderful events. "Just doing it" has been the best way for me to learn and I've appreciated your patience and kind words as I transition into my new role.

Some of you I've met in person, some on the phone, and I look forward to meeting or speaking with many more of you in the coming months. If you're in the Senior Center, stop by room 201 and say hello! I always have time for a chat with our members and volunteers. If you need anything at all, please give me a call at 319-800-9003 or email me at membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org. Take care and see you soon!



It was a cool but sunny day earlier this month when TRAIL members visited Rochester Cemetery in Cedar County to enjoy native wildflowers in this portion of untouched prairie. Their hike was led by Elizabeth Swain, director of the Master Naturalist Program. Thanks to Barb Stein for providing photos of the event.



Member survey synopsis

Thanks to all who responded to our 2019 TRAIL member survey! The survey yielded a 50 percent return rate, which is quite good for a project of this nature. Here are a few highlights:

- ➔ To the questions about member expectations and satisfaction that were asked in both 2018 and 2019, we had more and stronger positive responses this year than last.
- ➔ Of the various benefits offered to TRAIL members, our social and educational events were ranked highest in perceived quality and value.
- ➔ In the comments sections, several Full members praised TRAIL volunteers' friendliness and willingness to go "above and beyond" the task at hand.
- ➔ Responses revealed that our prescreened service provider program isn't being as widely used as we would like, and perhaps could be strengthened with the addition of other business categories.

We will spend more time analyzing these survey results in the coming months, and may convene some small focus groups to explore ways to improve TRAIL's services and overall member satisfaction.

If you have additional comments and suggestions, don't wait for the next survey—we welcome your feedback at any time. To quote this month's anniversary party theme, that's how TRAIL and its members will become "better together!"

We hereby declare . . .

At the May 7, 2019, meeting of Iowa City's City Council, Mayor Jim Throgmorton issued a proclamation declaring May to be **Older Americans Month** in Iowa City. TRAIL was joined at the meeting by representatives from several other local senior-services organizations, including the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center, Oaknoll, Iowa City Hospice, Caring Hands & More, and the Johnson County Task Force on Aging. TRAIL board member Susan Shullaw accepted the proclamation on behalf of assembled guests; it will be displayed for public viewing at the Senior Center.

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

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

TRAIL Office closed • Monday, May 27

[LIVING WELL: Wellness—A Lifestyle](#)

Tuesday, May 28, 1 to 2 PM

Coralville Public Library, Meeting Room A

Come learn how lifestyle factors, like nutrition and exercise, can have a SIGNIFICANT impact on our physical health and rehabilitation, brain health, and emotional health. Julie Fitzpatrick, DPT, founder/owner of Optimal Wellness PLLC, is a physical therapist with over 25 years of experience. Her talk will explain how good nutrition, exercise, and self-care can be transformative at any age, but especially for older adults. *Sponsored by James Investment Group.*



[The Antique Car Museum Tour](#)

Tuesday, June 4, 10:30 AM to noon

860 Quarry Road, Coralville

This museum showcases more than 70 autos dating from 1899 to 1995. The owner of the museum will show us around and answer questions. Members pay their own entrance fee of \$5. Register before June 1.

[Dine Around: Fuzzy's Taco Shop](#)

Tuesday, June 4, noon to 1:30 PM

Fuzzy's is located right across the street from the Antique Car Museum and offers a great menu of tacos, burritos, salads, quesadillas, and more. Members pay their own charges. Register before June 1.

[Hike Coralville's Secret Trail](#)

Wednesday, June 12, 9 to 10 AM

Tom Harkin Trailhead, parking lot on Camp Cardinal Road

The Clear Creek Greenbelt trail is Coralville's hidden gem, winding through woods and wetlands. It is flat and mostly shaded, with bridges spanning the wetlands. Stan Miller will lead the hike at a leisurely pace. Register before June 12.

[Book Group](#)

Thursday, June 13, 1:30 to 3 PM

Panera at Iowa City Marketplace. *New TRAIL members welcome!*



[Picnic in the Park](#)

Friday, June 14, 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

City Park Shelter #10, Lower City Park, 200 Park Road, Iowa City

Welcome summer with an outdoor luncheon! Please bring something to share: fruit, salad, cheese and crackers, or chips and dip. Dessert and drinks provided.

[Yarning Group](#)

Thursday, June 20, 1:30 to 3:30 PM

Home of Nancy Collins, 169 Notting Hill Lane, Iowa City. *New TRAIL members welcome!*

[Volunteer Orientation](#)

Saturday, June 15, 10 to 11 AM

Hills Bank, 1401 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

As a TRAIL volunteer, you can set your own schedule and perform the tasks that are most suited to your skills. (Volunteer drivers are particularly needed.) Register online or call the TRAIL office at 319-800-9003. Better yet, bring a friend!