



Happy Holidays!

Let TRAIL help with New Year's resolutions

Do these look familiar?

Eat better. Lose weight. Get better sleep.

They are common New Year's resolutions for older adults. Maybe you have made them yourself, or plan to make one of them for 2025.

But if you are also looking for new ideas, TRAIL has plenty to offer:

- Ready to meet some new people? In TRAIL's monthly calendar you'll find dates for happy hours, casual gatherings at member homes, or dine-arounds at area restaurants.
- Are you searching for new reading adventures? Check out TRAIL's monthly book club on Zoom or the monthly men's book club. And keep an eye open for online book talks with Iowa City Public Library professionals.
- Want to get out in the community more? The TRAIL calendar lists many area offerings, from entertainment to arts and craft sales to caregiver wellness events. And in the warmer months you can explore local trails and waterways with organized activities.

Make it easy on yourself. Resolve to make one new acquaintance, read one new book, or schedule one new outing in the new year. That one simple step will make it easy to take another and another.

Just visit TRAIL's [online calendar](#) or check the last page of this newsletter to get the scoop on current activities or ideas for 2025.

TRAIL office closures

Tuesday, December 24

Wednesday, December 25

Wednesday, January 1

We ask that members provide at least one week's notice when making a service request. However, members do not have to wait until the one-week window to call or email Jessica in the office. Service requests made well in advance are welcome! If members have appointments or requests from now through January 2025, Jessica would be happy to enter those into our volunteer system.



Facts vs. myths about assisted living

By Tracy Sherzer and Jordan Pahl, FeatherStone at Hickory Hill



Living independently in one's own home as we age is the goal for most individuals. There may come a time in some people's lives that it is no longer safe for them to do so, whether it be because they may need some assistance with some of their basic needs, cooking their meals, getting medication reminders or just needing some additional socialization. The thought of transitioning to assisted living can be overwhelming and intimidating to some. There are many myths about the transition from living independently to assisted living, and we would like to dispel some of them.

I will give up my independence if I move to assisted living.

MYTH!

Many confuse living independently with living on their own. While you may no longer own your own home, life in a senior living community can be as independent as you want it. Residents aren't limited to where they can go or what they can do. In fact, many seniors find that letting go of the responsibilities of home ownership allows them the freedom to finally live the way they've always wanted to! Plus, communities such as FeatherStone are loaded with amenities and activities that give you countless opportunities for fun and relaxation your way!

Assisted living is more expensive than living at home with home care.

MYTH!

Some families looking into senior living are often surprised by the sticker shock of monthly rates. While cost varies depending on apartment size or levels of care, the average cost of senior living is often comparable or even less than receiving the same services and support at home. Even for those who have paid off their mortgage, home ownership is still costly. Consider insurance, taxes, upkeep and repairs, utilities, emergency expenses, etc. At a senior living community, everything is included in one convenient rate – not to mention the convenience of having entertainment, social events, housekeeping services, and care support if ever needed right at your fingertips.

I shouldn't move until I need help taking care of myself.

MYTH!

Many have the idea that senior living communities are only for those who require assistance with daily activities. However, many seniors are making the choice to spend their healthy retirement years at a senior living community. Not only does community living come with convenience and a full, carefree lifestyle, but moving while you are still healthy allows you to stay in control of your choices. Waiting until an illness or health crisis occurs may rush the moving process and leave you wishing you had more options.

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Engaging Volunteers

NEED TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE?

One of the benefits TRAIL members enjoy is access to the Vendor Requests and Recommendations section of the Message Board on the TRAIL website. With winter quickly approaching, remember to check this board if you have projects that you need professional help with. **Below is a successful example of a TRAIL volunteer seeing a member's need and helping him find the right service. And then, to share the experience with others, the volunteer added the following vendor recommendation to the Message Board:**



TRAIL volunteer Jim Ruebush (right) and member Art Fleck look at resources for getting new gravel for his driveway.

"Sometimes TRAIL members need help with a service we volunteers can't provide. I visited a member a few times this summer to help him with a task. I noticed his gravel driveway had eroded over the years and now had some ruts in the tracks where car tires go. I asked him about plans to get it fixed. He said he wanted to get it done before winter but didn't know who to ask for help.

We looked on the internet and found **Clinton Dynamics** in Shellsburg. Two brothers run this small company. They also both work for the Cedar Rapids Police Department. We assumed they would be trustworthy. They came soon after being contacted and gave a quote for the cost. The work was efficient and done as quoted. The TRAIL member was happy with their work. These two also partner with another company called **KJ Haul Away** which provides hauling and removal services. I explained that our members sometimes need things moved out of their homes as donations to worthy organizations. The KJ representative understood that need and said he does that kind of service, too. Both companies are on the internet. Our experience with both companies was quite positive." —Jim Ruebush

Facts vs. myths about assisted living *continued*



In essence, assisted living communities provide a supportive environment that balances care with independence. They offer tailored medical assistance, safety features, and a strong sense of community, which can enhance quality of life for individuals who need help with daily tasks. The convenience of maintenance-free living, social opportunities, and on-site health care services can make assisted living a preferable choice for those looking to ease the burden of home ownership while still maintaining a sense of autonomy. This type of living arrangement can be particularly appealing as health care needs grow, offering both peace of mind for residents and their families.

Learn more about the pros of assisted living in the **More Resources** section of the TRAIL website.

Thanks to Woofables for sponsoring this month's newsletter.



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A gift to say thanks

'Tis the season when we like to remind TRAIL members, volunteers, donors, and friends to make your year-end gifts to TRAIL's annual fund. But this year is special. We're not only preparing to say goodbye to 2024, but also to Bob Untiedt (pictured left), who's retiring after four years as TRAIL's executive director.

TRAIL is a strong and stable organization thanks to Bob's leadership. What better way to express our gratitude than by making a year-end gift to TRAIL in his honor? And here's the bonus: Your 2024 contribution also helps ensure that TRAIL's new executive director will inherit an organization that's on solid financial footing.

Making a gift in Bob's honor (or to honor or memorialize anyone else) is easy. If you choose to **give online**, just fill in a dollar amount, click Submit, and you'll be given several options to customize your gift. Or if you'd rather mail or drop off a check at the TRAIL office, just note "in honor of [name]" on the bottom.

We hope you'll make your 2024 annual fund gift today – to honor the past and, just as important, to help secure TRAIL's future. **Thank you!**



Take the JCLC survey!

The Johnson County Livable Community (JCLC) for Successful Aging Policy Board has launched a survey aimed at understanding the experiences and perceptions of residents aged 45 and older regarding livability in Johnson County.



The survey will cover critical topics related to livability and is designed to capture the voices of county residents. Responses will be used to inform strategic planning efforts, guide recommendations for improving livability in Johnson County, and assist in obtaining the **AARP designation** for Johnson County as an "Age Friendly Community."

Take the survey: **[CLICK HERE!](#)**

If you have questions, prefer a paper survey, or wish to complete the survey by phone, call JCLC at 319-335-1664 or email livablecommunity@johnsoncountyiowa.gov.



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

The TRAIL office will be closed December 24, 25, and January 1.

[Book Club: Table for Two by Amor Towles](#) (via Zoom)

Monday, December 16, 1 to 2 PM

[Holiday Party with Appetizers and Mocktails \(no alcohol\)](#)

Tuesday, December 17, 2 to 3:30 PM

Susan Spaziani's home

[Fountain Pen Meetup](#)

Wednesday, December 18, 6 to 8 PM

Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room D, 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Holiday Flower Arranging Workshop with Willow and Stock Florists](#)

Thursday, December 19, 9 to 10 AM

Willow and Stock Flower Shop, 207 North Linn Street, Iowa City

[Features of Popular Personal Finance Apps: Venmo, Cash App, and PayPal](#)

Friday, December 20, Noon to 5 PM

Iowa City Public Library, Digital Media Lab, 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Sunrise Solstice Saunter](#)

Saturday, December 21, 6:45 to 9 AM

Cedar River Crossing, 5473 Sutliff Road NE, Solon

[Free Drop-In DIY Gift Wrapping](#)

Sunday, December 22, Noon to 5 PM

Iowa City Public Library, Digital Media Lab, 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Potluck Dinner at Barb's Condo](#)

Friday, December 27, 4:30 to 7 PM

Barb Stein's home

[Google Drive Basics](#)

Monday, December 30, 10:30 to 11:30 AM

Iowa City Public Library, Digital Media Lab, 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Member Happy Hour \\$](#)

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

Orchard Green, 521 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

[TRAIL Book Club for Men](#)

Thursday, January 9, 1 to 3 PM

Courtyard by Marriott, 901 Melrose Avenue, Iowa City

[Early Lunch/Coffee at the Kava House and Cafe in Swisher \\$](#)

Thursday, January 16, 11 AM to 2:30 PM

Kava House and Cafe, 122 2nd Street SE, Swisher

[Book Club: An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s](#)

(via Zoom)

Monday, January 20, 1 to 2 PM