



From Christine Scheetz Reflections on month #1



Christine with Hachi
visiting Michigan

I am delighted to be serving as your Executive Director and am happy to report it has been a smooth transition from serving on the Board of Directors to this new role. Here are a few things I've learned and observed in this first month.

- TRAIL's founders and subsequent boards and committees have done heavy lifting to create a strong foundation. Having worked with dozens of nonprofits over the years, I am impressed by TRAIL's organizational strengths.

Sometimes young nonprofits struggle with establishing policies and processes that serve the organization as it grows. Not so with TRAIL. At every turn, thoughtful consideration has been given to ensure we are never operating in crisis mode, but rather that we are well prepared to engage, serve, adapt, and grow.

- One of the most rewarding aspects of this role has been engaging with our members. Hearing firsthand how TRAIL has improved your lives has been inspiring. You have shared what TRAIL membership means to you, whether you've participated in social and educational events or benefited from volunteers providing transportation or assisting with essential errands, offering companionship, providing medical advocacy, or helping plan for life transitions. Thank you for sharing your stories, and I look forward to hearing many more in the months and years ahead. With that said, please know we also want

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April 15: TAX DAY

A friendly reminder that taxes must be filed by April 15.

Low- to moderate-income taxpayers, especially those age 60+, can receive free tax preparation services at the Senior Center now through mid-April. Services are available by appointment and are provided by trained volunteers of the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program.

Clients schedule an intake appointment, drop off their tax-related materials, and sign some forms. A counselor consults the client with any questions and prepares the tax return while the client waits. The counselor then reviews the completed return with the client before e-filing.

To schedule an appointment or learn more, call the Senior Center at 319-356-5220.


For information especially applicable to older adults, visit the [IRS website](#) or call the IRS local Taxpayer Assistance Center at 844-545-5640.

Reflections on month #1 *continued*

to hear your ideas about ways TRAIL can improve or if you ever encounter a problem that you'd like to see addressed.

- Working with TRAIL has only deepened my admiration for people who give their time and talents so generously. Volunteers provide essential services that help TRAIL members remain independent, connected, safe, and thriving in the places they call home. In addition to the volunteer services mentioned above and the stellar Board of Directors, dozens of volunteers work on seven committees (Membership, Volunteer, Social & Educational Programs, Marketing & Communications, Development, Finance & Operations, and Executive). I'm blown away by their commitment, creativity, and collaboration both within each committee and collectively. Volunteers are the backbone of TRAIL, and Member and Volunteer Services Coordinator Jessica Hahn and I are here to support you in any way we can.
- And while we're talking about Jessica, I've learned what you already know – she is a rare gem! Her compassion, dedication, and ability to match member needs with volunteer interests is unmatched. Thank you, Jessica!
- TRAIL has an excellent reputation in the community. There are many ways to measure this, both qualitatively and quantitatively. On the quantitative side are things like membership, volunteers, and the in-kind and financial support our community provides. TRAIL has received grants from the City of Iowa City, Johnson County, Coralville, the Community Foundation of Johnson County, and hundreds of businesses, individuals, and households. As awareness grows, so too grow donations to support TRAIL's mission-driven work. Thank you to all who have given and all who are joining us as new donors. Together, we're making a difference in how our community supports older adults.

We have much to celebrate, and as you'll see throughout the newsletter, the upcoming events will give us plenty of opportunities to gather and do just that! I look forward to seeing you at these events and thank you for your warm welcome.



WHO ARE YOUR
go-to service
providers?

The Vendor Requests & Recommendations forum on TRAIL's member website needs your help.

More to the point, TRAIL members who've been posting there in recent months—seeking everything from housecleaners to furniture movers—are hoping you'll weigh in with advice and suggestions.

It's quick and easy to help your fellow TRAIL members in this way. Just log on to the TRAIL member website, click on FOR MEMBERS in the navigation bar at the top of the page, and from the drop-down menu there, click on MESSAGE BOARDS.

On that page, the **Vendor Requests & Recommendations** category is the first one listed. Click on that category and a page will appear with all the message "threads" that have been posted. Click on any one of them to add your comments.

Besides directing others to your favorite service providers, this website feature can also introduce you to vendors and services that you might need now or in the future. Recent posts have recommended trustworthy plumbers, electricians, a local seamstress, and more. Share your best contacts and pick up a few new ones by visiting our MESSAGE BOARDS site today. **Thank you!**

Welcome, new TRAIL members!

Richard Blazek

Karen Boatman

Denice and Michael Connell

Gail Halloran

Cindy Harrington

Patricia Kieffer

Teresa Mangum and Corey
Creekmur

Nancy Ostrognai and
Charles Frohman

Mary Wiemann



TRAIL membership **saves you money!**

Full members most often tell us they joined TRAIL to gain access to our vital volunteer services. Not many mention that TRAIL is also a smart financial choice. But in preparing TRAIL's 2025 *Johnson County Senior Housing and Services Guide* (coming your way in June!), we were struck by the rising cost of services that help older adults age in place.

In these inflationary times, TRAIL membership can be a real bargain. Consider these cost comparisons:

\$ Hiring in-home help for light house chores, yard work, minor repairs, or occasional pet care can cost \$35/hour or more. Assuming you need two hours' worth of such services just once per season (four times/year), that adds \$280 to your annual expenses.

\$ Transportation to medical appointments, shopping, or other errands can be costly as well, particularly if you need the "to and through the door" service that TRAIL volunteers provide. Fees for this type of service can also start at \$35/hour. If you require this kind of personalized transportation every other week, that's \$840 per year.

\$ Many of us need occasional help with our computers, phones, or setting up new streaming services. Depending on the complexity of the job, an in-home visit from a tech expert can cost \$150/hour. Maybe you can get by with just one such visit per year.

All told, these common at-home services can cost \$1,270 or more annually. Ouch! Compare that figure to the cost of a Full TRAIL membership for a single-person household, which is just \$720 per year (\$60/month).

Beyond the cost savings is the convenience of relying on TRAIL volunteers for at-home help, and the quality of care they provide. These are friendly, helpful, and well-trained individuals who devote their time to TRAIL because they enjoy working with older adults and are committed to our mission—at no additional cost to you.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

If you are considering joining TRAIL as a **Full member**, or upgrading from **Affiliate to Full**, do it now – in time for spring cleaning! Jessica in the TRAIL office will be happy to tell you more. Call or email her today at 319-800-9903 or membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

Engaging Volunteers

MEDICAL ADVOCACY PUSH



Spread the word!

Volunteers, we need your help to ensure that Full members know about the Medical Advocacy Service available to them.

Medical advocate volunteers help members with all types of health care appointments, from regular clinic appointments to special procedures such as cataract surgery or colonoscopy.



Volunteer **Victoria Steelman** has served as a medical advocate many times for members and believes that having a “second set of ears” is very important. **“Doctor visits can be confusing, so having me there to keep accurate notes and remind them of questions and issues they wanted to bring up is so helpful to the member.”**

The service can be particularly valuable for members who do not have a loved one or friend who can accompany them to health care appointments. “As medical advocates, we are there to help so members are not going through it alone. Especially with visits that require a procedure, we stay there and then make sure they get home and settled safely.”

Victoria and others in TRAIL believe that more Full members could benefit from the service but may not be aware of it.

“If volunteers providing transportation could remember to talk with members about the Medical Advocacy Service, that is one way we could really spread the word,” she says. See the **adjacent sidebar** for more information on the Medical Advocacy Service.

Medical advocate volunteers do not need to have health care experience; they receive extra training and instructions on how to provide the service.

“It is such a valuable and unique service and it’s not really replicated by any other agency in the area,” Victoria notes.

So whether you are interested in becoming a medical advocate volunteer or actively promoting the service, you will be helping TRAIL’s Full members with their health care experiences.

For more information on the service or becoming a volunteer, contact the TRAIL office at 319-800-9003, or email membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org. **Remember, TRAIL members can also be volunteers!**



Medical Advocate RESPONSIBILITIES

TRAIL medical advocate volunteers **MAY** perform the following duties:

Meet with the member to help prepare for health care visits

Help the member formulate questions for the health care provider, fill out forms, and make lists of medications, etc.

Provide transportation to and from health care appointments

Attend physician visits and take notes

Cue the member to ask their questions and request clarification, or speak on the member’s behalf (if requested by the member)

Review and provide the member with a copy of the notes from the visit

Assist the member with scheduling follow-up appointments

Accompany the member to same-day procedures that do not require more than local anesthesia or home care/attendance after the procedure

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Medical Advocate RESPONSIBILITIES *continued*

TRAIL medical advocate volunteers **DO NOT** perform the following duties:

Physical assistance or lifting, but volunteers can offer a hand for stability when walking or self-transferring

Organizing or administering medications in any capacity

Activities of Daily Living (ADL) such as feeding, bathing, grooming, dressing, toileting, wound care, home care, etc.

Stay in a member's home after a surgery/procedure



Towncrest LTC offers medication packaging, delivery, medication reviews, vaccines, and so much more!

You may be eligible to receive these services for FREE, call us or check out the website below to see if you qualify!

319-688-4398 www.getmy medsdelivered.com/towncrest-pharmacy/

Thanks to Towncrest Pharmacy for sponsoring this month's newsletter.

MEMBERS ON THE GO



Above, pictured left to right, Barbara Plakans, Ana Peterson, and Connie Peterson enjoyed a stroll around the Coral Ridge Mall on Wednesday, February 26. This TRAIL-sponsored event gives members the benefit of exercise without worrying about the weather. It is also a great opportunity to meet new people.

LUNCH BUNCH

Below, several TRAIL members (Alfrieta Monagan, Barb Stein, and Carol Throckmorton) met for a light lunch on Wednesday, March 12 at the home of Vicki and Dwight Tardy. Butternut squash soup and apple salad took center stage. The TRAIL calendar lists small-group activities like this and larger group activities, available to both Full and Affiliate members. Check out the [TRAIL calendar](#), and don't forget to contact Jessica Hahn in the TRAIL office if you would like a ride to the event. She can be reached at 319-800-9003 or at membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.





New TRAIL members Teresa Mangum and Corey Creekmur are pictured above on a recent trip to Oaxaca, Mexico, where they took a Zapotec vegetarian cooking class.

New TRAIL members Teresa Mangum and Corey Creekmur have been familiar with TRAIL since its earliest days. In September 2018 the married couple drew on their academic studies to present the community-wide TRAIL event, “The Silver Screen: Aging through the Lens of Popular Cinema.”

Today Teresa is newly retired from UI and Corey is enjoying phased retirement, planning to fully retire in June 2026. Teresa taught in the Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) and English departments and was director of the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. Corey teaches in the Department of Cinematic Arts and is a faculty member in GWSS and English. He also directed the Institute for Cinema and Culture.

“When we were thinking about retirement, it seemed like a great time to learn about the resources that TRAIL has to offer,” Teresa says.

Teresa also plans to volunteer more in retirement and looks forward to doing so with TRAIL.

In their 2018 presentation, the couple highlighted common themes in films, including aging as a social problem, stereotypes of aging, and dementia.

And today? “In the last five years, I think there’s been a greater willingness to let older people take center stage in films,” Teresa says.

“When I tell friends in other communities about TRAIL, they are so impressed,” Teresa says. “We are so fortunate to have TRAIL in our community.”

NEW MEMBERS PROFILE

One-time presenters, now members

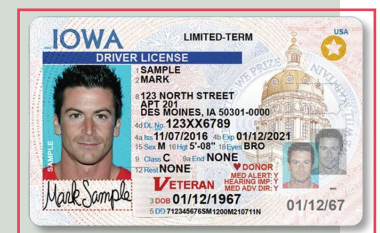
Are you familiar with the REAL ID?

The REAL ID was established by an act of Congress in 2005 in order to set standards for issuing forms of identification such as driver’s licenses and identification cards.

Beginning May 7, 2025, anyone 18 years and older who plans to fly domestically or visit certain federal facilities will need a REAL ID or another acceptable form of identification (a passport is one).

A REAL ID compliant card has a gold star in the upper right corner.

For more information about obtaining a REAL ID in Iowa, visit [iowa REAL ID](https://www.iowa.gov/REALID).





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, vendors, and friends. If you have questions or suggestions about the newsletter, email info@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

Upcoming TRAIL Events Calendar

[Book Club: James by Percival Everett](#) (via Zoom)

Monday, March 17, 1 to 2 PM

[Cinema Salon](#)

Tuesday, March 18, 3 to 5 PM

FilmScene at the Chauncey, 404 East College Street, Iowa City

[100 Grannies Lecture Series](#)

Mondays throughout March, 3 to 4 PM

Iowa City Senior Center Room 302, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Morning Coffee in My Home](#)

Monday, March 24, 10 to 11:30 AM

Betsy Fischer's house, Iowa City

[Yarning Group](#)

Tuesday, March 25, 1 to 3 PM

Vicky Tardy's house

[Welcome Reception for TRAIL Executive Director Christine Scheetz](#)

Wednesday, March 26, 4:30 to 6 PM

Iowa City Senior Center Assembly Room, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

[Healthy Eating Made Easy: A Nutrition Lunch & Learn](#)

Thursday, March 27, 11:30 AM to 1 PM

Grand Living at Bridgewater, 3 Russell Slade Boulevard, Coralville

[Lunch and Cedar Rapids Art Museum](#)

Thursday, March 27, 11:30 AM to 3 PM

The Class Act (The Hotel at Kirkwood) and Cedar Rapids Art Museum, Cedar Rapids

[Iowa History 101: Iowa's First Japanese Garden](#) (via Zoom)

Thursday, March 27, noon to 1 PM

[Member Happy Hour \\$](#)

Tuesday, April 1, 4:30 to 6:30 PM

Orchard Green, 521 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

[Virtual Meet & Greet with TRAIL Executive Director Christine Scheetz](#)

(via Zoom)

Wednesday, April 2, 1:30 to 2:30 PM

[New Member Orientation](#)

Thursday, April 3, 1:30 to 2:30 PM

Java House, 575 South First Avenue, Iowa City

[A Themed Tour at The University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art](#)

Wednesday, April 9, 2 to 3 PM

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

[Protecting Older Adults from Financial Exploitation Series](#) (via Zoom)

Tuesday, April 15, 2 to 3 PM