



By TRAIL Executive Director Christine Scheetz

LOOKING AHEAD:

TRAIL's vision for the next three years



We are excited to share TRAIL's new Strategic Plan for 2026–2029—a roadmap to guide our work over the next three years and build on the already strong foundation that has been forged over the last nine years. The Board's adoption of this plan this spring was the culmination of months of input from volunteers, members, donors, and community partners and we thank you all.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything TRAIL does and for that reason we felt it important to include volunteers in TRAIL's new mission statement:

TRAIL is powered by volunteers to help older adults live and age with support, safety, and connection in the places they call home by providing tools and resources for active independent living.

To deliver on our mission, TRAIL will focus on three key areas:

Enhancing the Member and Volunteer Experience

Our goal is to grow to 300 members (we're at about 260 now) while maintaining the personal connections and quality services that make TRAIL special. We will strengthen volunteer engagement through enhanced recruitment, training, support, leadership opportunities, and recognition. At the same time, we will continue improving the member experience by expanding outreach, strengthening services,

enhancing medical advocacy and life transition services, and increasing opportunities for social connection and lifelong learning.



Expanding Community Education and Advocacy

TRAIL will continue to build on its reputation as a trusted resource for aging well with increased community programs and events throughout Johnson County, expanding our bi-annual *Johnson County Senior Housing and Services Guide* and resource fair, and working with community partners to promote age-friendly policies and practices.

Strengthening Sustainability and Infrastructure

To support growth, we'll focus on building capacity and our financial stability through increased fundraising, grants, partnerships, and the creation of a TRAIL endowment fund. We'll also strengthen our data systems, develop future leaders, and add volunteer and staffing capacity where needed.

Throughout this work, TRAIL will be guided by our BRAVE values:

Belonging – Creating an inclusive community that welcomes, honors, and supports older adults and volunteers with compassion and kindness

Resilience – Establishing a culture that can withstand adversity

Accountability – Demonstrating transparency and measurable impact, including the value of volunteer contributions

Vision – Innovating to meet future needs through community-driven and volunteer-supported solutions

Continued on page 7

Join us on our next
kayaking
adventure

Tuesday, August 4, 2026
9:30 to 11 AM

More info at [TRAIL calendar](#).



By Teresa Mangum, TRAIL volunteer

Kent Park SUMMER KAYAKING

The waterlilies at K.W. Kent Park are in bloom. For one group of TRAIL members, that's a sign that it's "yak" time!

Once again this June, Barb Stein and her Social and Educational Programs Committee organized a kayak expedition for TRAIL adventurers. Led by Kristen Morrow, a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) education specialist and two of her colleagues, a lively group recently spent a blissful hour paddling the 27-acre lake.

On that perfect summer day, the lake was pristine. Seven historic bridges have been relocated from the Iowa countryside to the park. Several form welcoming entrances to shady coves around the lake. On one side of a kayak, you find miniature high rises—water plants stretching 20 feet from the lake floor to the surface. On the other side, lily pad suburbs spread toward the shore.

We traveled in good company. Small schools of tiny bass, bluegill, and crappie darted below and hawks and herons sailed above. An irascible turtle made a quick exit.

Named for a local photographer and birder, Frederick Wallace Kent, the 1,062-acre park is the largest area owned by Johnson County Conservation (JCC). You can wander 13 miles of trails through a diverse ecosystem that ranges from prairie to oak savanna to forest and



wetlands. In recent years, the JCC has worked hard to restore the original hill prairie. Depending on the time you visit,

you'll find Virginia Bluebells, Wild Geranium, Wild Blue Phlox, Trout Lily, Purple Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Wild Bergamot, and Tickseed Sunflowers, on view from the lake as

well as the trails. (The botanically minded among you can find a detailed list of plants on the Johnson County Conservation [homepage](#).)

Of special interest to kayakers, the lake represents an impressive environmental success story. Recognizing that phosphorus from nearby farm runoff and excessive sediment were destroying the water quality, the JCC purchased adjacent farmland, dredged and redesigned the lake, planted over 30,000 aquatic plants, and enhanced fish habitat.

We TRAIL "yakkers" could not be more grateful. We'll be ready to don our sunscreen and life jackets, roll ourselves once again into those kayaks kindly provided by the DNR, and paddle our way through the sunlit peace of Kent Park's lake when the waterlilies bloom again next summer.



ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS



Meet Norah Rehor

A college class first led Norah Rehor to volunteer with TRAIL, but its mission and the relationships she has built are what keep her engaged—and have inspired her to recruit friends to volunteer as well.

Norah began volunteering with TRAIL two and half years ago when she took the class, Writing and Community Outreach. She was given a list of organizations, and after doing some research and “a little soul-searching,” she chose TRAIL. “TRAIL felt unique to Iowa City in a way that really resonated with me. I grew up in a close-knit neighborhood, in LaGrange, Illinois, and I’ve always believed that community is something we build intentionally, across generations,” she says.

Volunteering has been a part of her life since high school and has included Operation Snowball, a youth prevention and leadership program (she still leads twice annual weekend retreats), Pillars Community Health, Iowa Youth Writing Project, Iowa Summer Writing Festival, Africafest, and serving as a direct-service advocate with Rape Victim Advocacy Program, supporting survivors through trauma-responsive care.

As a TRAIL service volunteer, Norah has provided transportation, home services, friendly visits, and medical advocacy and has even helped Jessica in the TRAIL office. Helping older adults in their homes reminds her of the help she provided her own grandmother as she recovered from a fall.

“I kept thinking about the people here who might also have family far away—people who deserve support, connection, and someone in their corner when life becomes inconvenient or overwhelming. Volunteering with TRAIL felt like a way to offer that,” she says.

She especially enjoys conversations she has with members. “Those moments feel ordinary, but they genuinely brighten my days. TRAIL has

given me a deeper sense of belonging in Iowa City, and I’m grateful for the relationships it has brought into my life.”

Norah graduated from the University of Iowa in May with a degree from the Department of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies. She also received certificates in writing, nonprofit leadership and philanthropy, and a minor in psychology.

When she faced the possibility of leaving Iowa City after graduation, Norah says, “I couldn’t bring myself to leave



Above: photos that were posted by the University showing Nora with a childhood friend who also graduated from Iowa.

without making sure another volunteer stepped in. I trusted only one person with that handoff, and that was Abbi, my best friend and one of the most capable and loving people I know.

“The best part is that I ended up staying in Iowa City doing freelance work for a journalist while I search for a full-time job in the

nonprofit world. So now TRAIL gets both of us. Abbi starts grad school at Iowa this fall, and I’m so excited for you all to meet her!”

Interested in volunteering? Contact the TRAIL office at 319-800-9003 or membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

□ MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR senior living tour

TRAIL's mission has always been to help older adults live better and longer in the places they call home. But the definition of "home" may need to change as we age. For some older adults, moving into a senior living community is the right option. In fact, TRAIL has quite a few members who live in these communities and choose to maintain their TRAIL membership because of our volunteer services (such as transportation) and social opportunities we provide.

As a service to our members, TRAIL's Social and Educational Programs Committee is offering tours of several Johnson County senior living communities this summer. Each tour will be accompanied by a staff person from the community, and tour participants will have time to ask questions.

Below are links to a few resources that will help you think about what **questions to ask on these tours**, and what aspects of communal living might matter most to you or a loved one:

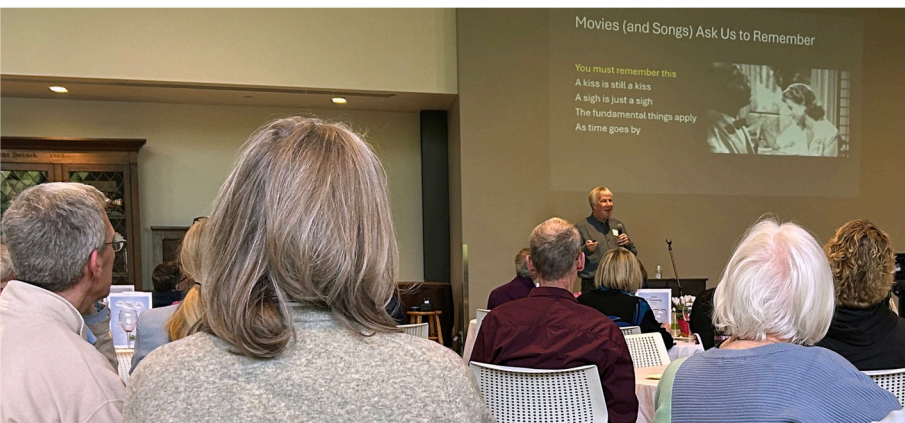
- On pages 46-47 of TRAIL's 2025 *Johnson County Senior Housing & Services Guide*, available in PDF form on the [TRAIL website](#) or as a printed booklet from the TRAIL office, you'll find 12 tips for weighing various senior housing options from the nonprofit [Where You Live Matters](#).
- Care.com offers an extensive [guide to senior living](#) that explains the various types of senior living accommodations and what kinds of questions to ask about each.
- If your interest is in assisted living, whether now or in the future, you may want to review this [Assisted Living Checklist](#) from AARP.

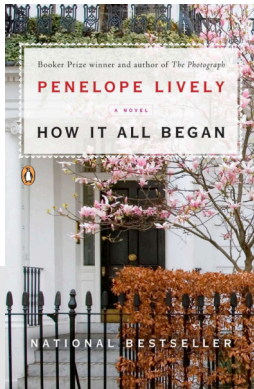




TRAIL's 9th Anniversary

More than 100 TRAIL members, volunteers, donors, and community partners returned to the Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville on May 21, 2026, to mark TRAIL's 9th anniversary. Guests enjoyed plentiful food, drink, and socializing. TRAIL's Executive Director Christine Scheetz opened the program with thanks to event Gold Sponsor McGrath Toyota of Iowa City; Silver Sponsors Hills Bank and StoryPoint Senior Living; and in-kind sponsors Bread Garden and Okoboji Wines. She reviewed TRAIL achievements, including fulfilling nearly 2,500 volunteer service requests in 2025! Corey Creekmur, retired UI professor of Cinema Arts, gave a thoughtful and entertaining presentation about "Movies and Memories."





What I'm reading

By TRAIL member Susan Shullaw

In *How It All Began* by the Booker Prize-winning author Penelope Lively, an elderly woman is mugged on a London street, an event that—like “the Butterfly Effect”—sets off a series of mishaps that impact the lives of multiple acquaintances and strangers.

It's the central figure, Charlotte Rainsford, whom I found most beguiling (and familiar) in this brief but action-packed novel. As she reckons with the aftermath of the mugging—navigating life with crutches, having to move in for a time with her distracted adult daughter—Charlotte muses about how elderhood complicates everything. “The twilight years,” she says. “Twilight my foot—roaring dawn of a new life, more like, the one you didn't know about.”

Lively, who was 78 when she wrote this novel, brings all the wisdom and humor of aging to this story and its cast of complex characters.

Do you have a favorite book to recommend to TRAIL friends? Just email your suggestion to susan@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.



Older adults and driving safety

Many of us were eager as teens to get a driver's license because it meant one thing to us: freedom.

Now as older adults, that ability to drive is just as important. It gives us the freedom to come and go as we please, to be independent, to be self-reliant. And older drivers can be among the safest on the road.

Up to a point, that is. Physical changes that often come with age can affect vision, reflexes, mobility, and physical fitness, all impacting one's ability to operate a vehicle safely. According to AAA, research shows that crash rates begin to increase as drivers reach their late 60s or early 70s and increase more rapidly after about age 75.

With that in mind, consider your own driving abilities or those of older family members. AAA offers a helpful online tool for just this purpose. It's called [“Drivers 65 Plus: Check Your Performance.”](#) It includes a driving self-assessment and many suggestions for improvement if needed.

Remember, as enjoyable as driving is, it also carries a lot of responsibility, so take an honest look at your own abilities as the years pass.

Transportation is one of TRAIL's most popular member services. In the last year, TRAIL volunteers provided approximately

830 rides

to our Full members. These included everything from doctor's appointments to book club meetings!

THANKS to **Briarwood Health Care Center** for sponsoring this month's newsletter.



Welcome to
Briarwood Health Care Center

For long-term comfort, focused rehab, and restful respite, we offer a caring hand.

Awarded the Iowa Governor's Award for Quality Care in 2025

Privately and locally owned and operated

605 Greenwood Drive, Iowa City, IA
319-338-7912
briarwoodhcc.com



TRAIL's Vision *continued*

Excellence – Delivering high-quality services and programs through staff, volunteers, members, and donors working in partnership

Most important, this plan belongs to all of us. Every volunteer who gives their time, every member who participates, every donor who invests in our mission, and every community partner who works alongside us plays a role in making this vision a reality.

As we prepare to celebrate TRAIL's 10th anniversary next year, we're energized by what lies ahead. Thank you for being part of this journey and helping us build a more connected, supported, and age-friendly Johnson County for everyone.



Top:

Left: Judi Clinton looks on as volunteers from CIVCO weed her flower beds.

Right: CIVCO yard crew after finishing a yard project—including taking a chain saw to dead tree limbs—at the home of TRAIL member Mardella Carlson.



Bottom:

Left: CIVCO volunteers continue their work.

Right: CIVCO team preparing for yard and garden project at the home of TRAIL members Jean and Drew Ives.

2026 Day of Caring

Volunteers from CIVCO Medical Solutions enjoyed beautiful weather while tackling some yard and garden projects at the homes of four TRAIL members. This annual event was made possible through United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties and Hills Bank.



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? Full members can 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

TRAIL office closed June 19 for Juneteenth.

Tour of Legacy Senior Living

Friday, June 19, 10 to 11 AM
1020 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City



Coffee Hour in My Home

Tuesday, June 23, 10 to 11:30 AM
Home of Mary Lynn Eckert, Iowa City

Kitty Corner Social Club Visit

Wednesday, June 24, 9:30 to 11 AM
20 South Clinton Street, Iowa City

Tour of Keystone Place at Forevergreen

Friday, June 26, 10 to 11 AM
1275 West Forevergreen Road, North Liberty

Lunch at Bobbers Grill

Monday, June 29, 11:30 AM to 1 PM
1850 Scales Bend Road NE, North Liberty

Tour of Melrose Meadows Retirement Community

Friday, July 2, 10 to 11 AM
350 Dublin Drive, Iowa City

Member Happy Hour \$

Tuesday, July 7, 4:30 to 6:30 PM
Monica's, 303 2nd Street, Coralville

Tour of the Summit of Coralville (formerly Grand Living)

Friday, July 10, 10 to 11 AM
3 Russell Slade Boulevard, Coralville

Tour of Stirlingshire - Coralville Assisted Living

Thursday, July 16, 10 to 11 AM
1140 Kennedy Parkway, Coralville

Artist Studio Visit: Claudia McGehee (illustrator/writer)

Friday, July 17, 10 to 11 AM
2533 Bluffwood Lane, Iowa City

Book Club: The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese (via Zoom)

(first half of the book in July)
Monday, July 20, 1 to 2 PM



Iowa City Jazz Festival

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
July 3 to July 5
(see schedule for times)
Downtown Iowa City