

Community Health

COMMUNITYHEALTHMAGAZINE.COM | AUTUMN 2023



Value of Togetherness

Connecting with others matters

PAGE 3





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COVER STORY

Better Together

3 Latino Luncheons spark communication, and sharing of cultures, traditions and great food.

The Great Outdoors

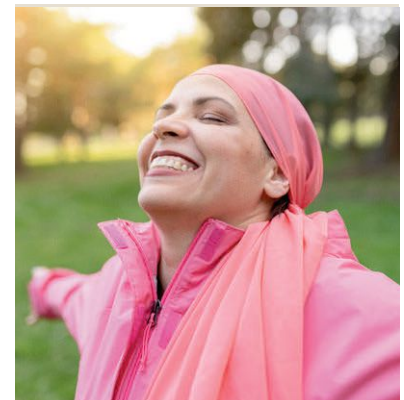
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COMMUNITY

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Embrace the Chill

Hello, and welcome to the fall 2023 edition of *Community Health*, our quarterly health and wellness publication. KLN Family Brands prides itself on putting people first and this magazine is part of that effort.

As the seasons change, so will the valuable information within this publication to inspire you on your wellness journey, along with resources available through the KLN company health plan. The once-vibrant colors that spread across the state this October have come and gone. A chill is now in the air and, for those of us residing in Minnesota, we know what will soon be coming. For some, it is best described as a dreaded four-letter word, but at my house, it is pure excitement. My 5-year-old has been anticipating snow for quite some time. However, I'm not quite ready for that just yet! As we embrace the rest of fall, we can find joy in many outdoor activities and reasons to celebrate the changing of the seasons with family and friends.

This edition is all about the value of togetherness. We explore the topics of inclusion and combating loneliness. At KLN, we offer unique programs and opportunities to make every team member feel part of a much larger community. Read about Latino Luncheons on page 3 and the Veterans Resource Group on pages 4-5.

Are you looking for a way to connect your mind and body? Yoga might be a great option — and don't be fooled, you don't have to be super flexible to give it a try! The benefits of yoga go beyond the mat. Learn more on pages 6-7.

For our big game enthusiasts — this edition is for you. We hear from two avid outdoorsmen, who both take aim at why this sport is mentally and physically on target for them.

With the change in seasons, and kids back in school, we tend to see an uptick in cases of the cold and flu. We never know when sickness will strike. In this edition, we highlight our competitive health insurance plan, and a co-worker shares his story of going under the knife for a major surgery and the financial outcome.

We would love to hear more stories about our employees' health, wellness and fitness endeavors. If you have something to share — a workout regimen, healthy eating plan, or places to enjoy the outdoors, just to name a few — please email me at mmoch@klfamilybrands.com

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Community Health*. We'll be back with another info-packed issue this winter.



Marni Moch
WELLNESS COORDINATOR
KLN FAMILY BRANDS

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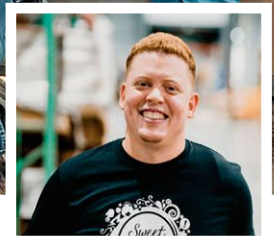
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Reaching Out



Camelia

"A benefit from these lunches is that we feel respected, and I like that leadership has a chance to listen to us."



Abdias

"I love those meetings. I can't wait for the next one. It's nice to sit with everybody — we have got people from Building 1, Building 2 and Tuffys. It's awesome! I love it! Great opportunities there, as we are listened to."

Latino Luncheons bring employees together to share cultures and connect with KLN staff

By Michael Gilbert

Good communication can make the difference between confident, motivated employees and an unproductive team with low morale.

Communication truly is key, and realizing its importance, KLN Family Brands in 2021 began hosting a bi-monthly event called "Latino Luncheons" to receive feedback from its Hispanic and Latino workforce.

The luncheons are held during normal work hours and feature food from local businesses provided by KLN. The luncheons are open to Latino and Hispanic employees and attended by approximately 25 people with representation from all three shifts, according to Nanci Arevalo, KLN's bilingual outreach coordinator.

"The purpose [of the luncheons] is to have a variety and diversity of culture, opinions and new ideas," Arevalo says. "We want to create a relationship of trust and identity and eradicate the English language barrier."

Arevalo's first exposure to the luncheons was as an invited guest, but now she has the responsibility of coordinating this program.

"The luncheons have been very positive," she says. "I've only received good feedback. People are excited to have their voice heard, and they feel very appreciated by the fact that the KLN owners attend the luncheons, too. This shows them that KLN is not just another company to work for, but it is a company that cares for its employees."

More than 20% of KLN's workforce is composed of Hispanic and Latino employees, according to Arevalo. She says that number is "growing fast," because people are hearing about the good things taking place at the company.

KLN currently has employees from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Honduras, México, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

"What I enjoy so much about the luncheons is learning more about people and their traditions," Arevalo says. "Our language is very similar, but we are very different with our cultures and traditions."

The luncheons have provided the opportunity for KLN leaders to hear from its Hispanic and Latino employees on all aspects of their jobs.

"We want to know how things are going for them at work, what we can do better and how we can be more inclusive," Arevalo says. "We want KLN to be the place Latinos and Hispanic employees want to work and refer their family members to come and work, too."

Arevalo says the luncheons are a good example of how KLN is constantly seeking to innovate.

"We are always looking for new resources on how to improve, plan for the future and provide the necessary resources to end the language barrier," she says. "It's not always easy to live in another country, so we want to open growth opportunities within the company for the Hispanic and Latino workforce."

Supporting Service

Resource Group aims to assist and advocate for veterans and their families

By Michael Gilbert



KLN Family Brands Safety Director Victor Peterson served in the Navy from 1984 to 1990.

There are a handful of professions in which the duties of the job prompt an instant, common bond among the employees.

An officer of the law, firefighter or an athlete participating in a team sport are all examples of jobs where a close sisterhood or brotherhood can easily be formed.

KLN Family Brands Safety Director Victor Peterson experienced an “unspoken bond” while he served as an electronics technician in the Navy from 1984 to 1990.

“Since the Vietnam War, [every member of the Armed Forces] has volunteered to be part of something much bigger than any one person,” Peterson says. “At a young age, we all signed an agreement and swore to defend a country and a constitution we love deeply. We often put ourselves in harm’s way and some paid the ultimate sacrifice. As a veteran, I have an unspoken bond with every veteran I come in contact with, because serving in the military was not a job we could have walked away from when it was scary or hard.”

To highlight its veterans on staff, better promote their issues and causes, and foster a military/veteran-friendly environment

in the workplace, KLN created the Veterans Resource Group in the fall of 2022. The group, which is open to all veterans from military branches including the national guards and reserves, meets virtually each quarter, Peterson says.

“Our Talent Management Team came up with the idea for the Veterans Resource Group after they were at a conference and met an individual who was involved with organizing similar type groups in Texas,” according to Peterson. “Through those discussions, [our Talent Management Team] thought it was something we might want to start at KLN for a variety of reasons.”

Peterson says a few of those reasons were to help newly hired veterans and service members feel more welcome, valued, respected and heard as well as recognizing and supporting those veterans already on staff.

“We want KLN to be known as the ‘military employer of choice’ to entice candidates from the military community to apply at KLN,” he says. “We also want to create an inclusive workplace for veterans and service members.”



Helping newly hired veterans and service members feel more welcome, valued, respected and heard are among the reasons KLN established its Veterans Resource Group.

A portion of each meeting is devoted to discussing federal, state and county veteran resources in order to assist and advocate for military veterans and their families, Peterson says. Guest speakers have also been invited to share news regarding certain benefits available to veterans.

“We want the Veterans Resource Group to serve as an information and support conduit for KLN employees called into service,” Peterson says. “We also want to provide information to our veterans about resources that may be available to them.”

A recent report published by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs stated seven out of every 100 veterans will have post traumatic stress disorder at some point in their life. With PTSD a continuing or growing concern for many veterans, the group has made it a point to focus on the topic and provide resources to any member who may be struggling.

“The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ website provides information [on PTSD] to any veteran who might be struggling, and the County Veterans Service Office can also help if needed,” Peterson says. “Those are a few examples [of the

types of support we discuss], but many of our veteran teammates are willing to assist anyone looking for help.”

Part of the group’s mission is also to have a presence in the community by participating in various local events. Peterson says members of the Veterans Resource Group were guest speakers at a handful of nearby high school Veterans Day events last year, and the group participated in National Poppy Day this May. The Veterans Resource Group has supported KLN’s efforts to raise funds and awareness for Patriot Assistance Dogs, a nonprofit organization that trains rescued dogs to become service dogs for veterans with PTSD. KLN and the veterans group also support Soldier’s 6, a Minnesota-based nonprofit that provides honorably discharged veterans, police officers, firefighters, paramedics, correctional officers and 911 dispatchers with specially trained K-9s.

“We are looking forward to fostering more relationships with veteran-focused organizations and assisting with community outreach events,” Peterson says. “[KLN and the Veterans Resource Group] does what we can when one of us is struggling.”



A Deeper LEVEL

Studios in Perham and Delano offer something for everyone

By Kyle Garmes

Brittany Stramer and Kate Leis aren't afraid of life's challenges. They're bold and brave — and in pretty darn good shape, too — and they want to help others feel the same way.

Stramer, 31, owns B Still Yoga, in Perham, and Leis, 46, owns Sunrise Fitness, in Delano.

Both have run their businesses at their current locations for about two years. And both have dealt with personal challenges ranging from an eating disorder to moving to Minnesota on a whim almost 20 years ago.

Both also love their jobs.

Stramer struggled with anorexia during her teen years, she says. In 2014, she found yoga. Not only did it help her physically, it put her in a good state of mind.

"I saw beauty in my body and who I was," Stramer says. "And I was able to accept that."

Stramer runs B Still Yoga with about 10 other instructors. She is certified in vinyasa yoga, hot yoga, restorative yoga, prenatal and postnatal yoga and yoga sculpt.

She completed 200- and 300-hour certification programs in 2017 and 2022, respectively.

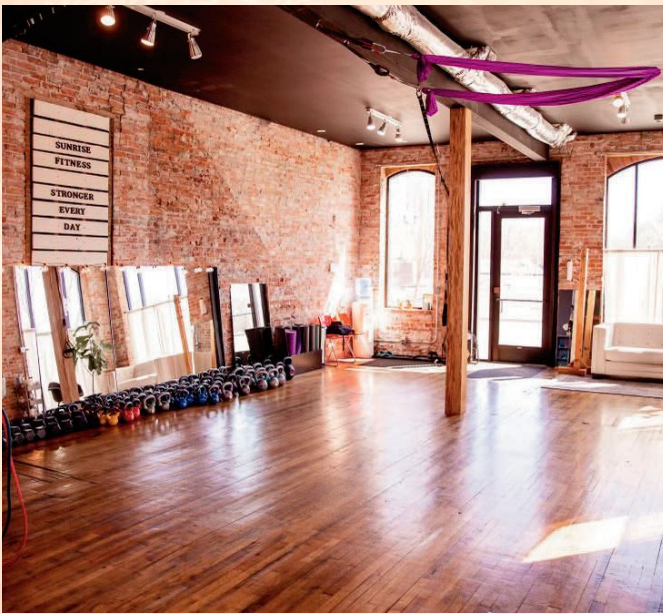
She is also a mother of two.

"Yoga helped me through pregnancy," Stramer says. "I've gotten to see the physical benefits, what it does for myself and the body — the respiratory, cardiovascular and digestive systems."

Men and women are welcome at B Still, Stramer says. Her goal is "creating this community within the community."

About four classes are held each day, some beginning at 6 a.m., and some at 5:30 p.m.

Clients are encouraged to follow "what's true to them." Vin-



yasa yoga is more likely to help beginners.

“The thing that we love about vinyasa is it’s connecting breath to movements,” Stramer says. “We’re always so busy. We rush, rush, rush; we go, go go — we need to stop and connect our body to our breath.”

Leis, meanwhile, opened Sunrise in June 2021. “The moon and stars aligned” to allow her to operate in her current space, and she offers full-strength training and yoga. She is part of a staff of four.

Her biggest draw to her profession, she explains, is helping others.

“I want to help people feel good about themselves and feel good in their skin and just in general feel positive and upbeat about who they are,” Leis says. “Because when people feel good, they can go and they can do good. And that snowballs.”

Leis grew up on a farm in Michigan, but in April 2004, she moved by herself to Minneapolis to become a caretaker for horses on a family’s farm.

It was difficult to meet people, she notes, so she stopped in a local running store to see if a running club existed.

It did and she joined. She ran a marathon in Honolulu in December 2003, and wanted to pursue running further.

It has, to say the least, become her passion.

She has now run 60 races of a marathon distance or more in states all over the country.

“It’s just been a fun journey,” says Leis, who planned to run a 100-mile race in Minnesota on Sept. 8. “What if I went [into a bar when looking for social activities?] Instead I went into a running store. So it’s interesting how sometimes our choices can really define the road that we go down.”

At Sunrise, Leis explains, she offers classes for all ages. She wants people to be able to play with their grandchildren or run a 5K for charity.

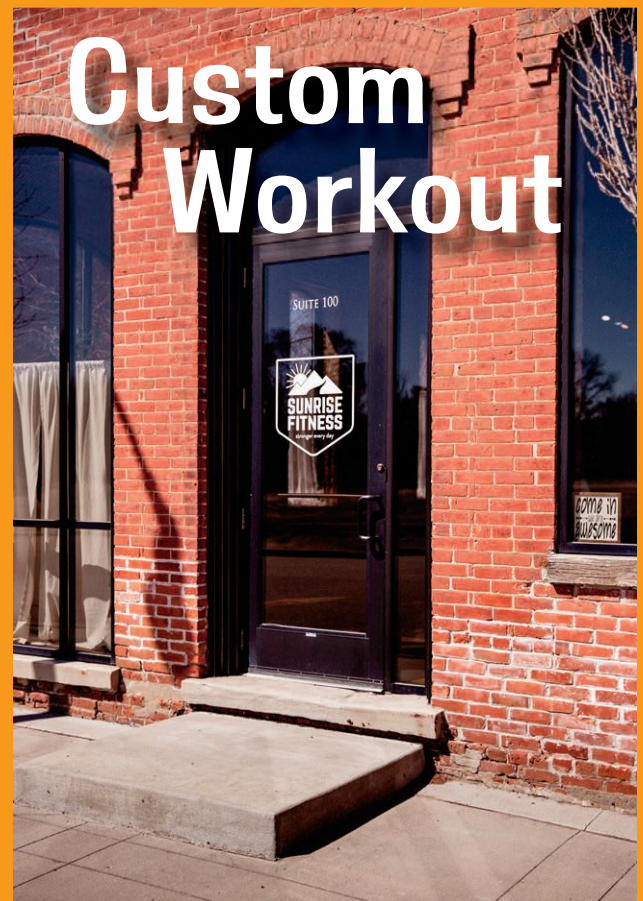
She offers personal training, and she has brought in instructors to teach yoga, mostly of the gentle-flow, vinyasa variety.

Leis is a “very schedule-oriented” person, she says. She is up and ready to go at 4 a.m. every day and in her studio by 6 a.m., either walking or riding her bike to work. By 9 p.m., she is in bed and her phone is off.

She said she’s enjoyed getting to know her clients, including how many kids they have and what they do for work.

Sunrise is about much more than giving people a good workout.

“You really get to know people,” Leis says, “on a deeper level.”



Custom Workout

Sunrise Fitness offers exercise for all levels and schedules

By Kyle Garmes

Sunrise Fitness in downtown Delano offers a respite for anyone looking to get in a workout.

Better yet, classes are available throughout the day, so people can schedule visits around their work schedule.

Katie Leuer, a sales manager at Tuffy’s Treat Company, is one of those people.

In recent months, she would work out during her lunch break or after work.

From strength workouts to yoga to kettlebell exercises, each visit made an impact.

“I just felt that it was the right thing for me to do at that time,” says Leuer, 50.

Leuer worked often with owner Kate Leis, who has coached individuals since 2015. She holds certifications in health and fitness, including through the American Council on Exercise and Precision and Nutrition.

Leuer says she loved that Leis would change the pace of a workout based on Leuer’s capability. If she needed something a little less strenuous, Leis abided.

But that didn’t mean Leis went easy on her.

“She challenged me, too,” Leuer notes.

Leuer also completed HIIT workouts (high-intensity interval training) at Sunrise, adding to an experience she says made her feel better about herself.

She might be taking a break from Sunrise at the moment, but asked if she would return, her answer was clear: “Absolutely.”

LONELY

BUT NOT ALONE

Myriad factors influence widespread feelings of loneliness and isolation

By Rebecca Fortner



Loneliness is affecting millions of Americans, and its impact may be more than just a fleeting feeling.

In fact, prolonged loneliness or lack of social connection is as unhealthy as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, raises the risk of premature death by nearly 30%, and increases the likelihood of a host of health problems including heart disease, stroke, anxiety, depression and dementia, according to a report released in May by the U.S. Surgeon General's office.

"Loneliness is a significant and ongoing problem that is continuing to grow," says Dr. Jill Schoeneman-Parker, a licensed clinical psychologist. "Different studies are citing the significant impacts of loneliness on physical health and on mental health."

Schoeneman-Parker, like Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, notes that loneliness was a concern prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Certainly, COVID has not been a friend in addressing issues of social isolation and loneliness," Schoeneman-Parker explains. "It's important to recognize that prior to COVID, Americans were already worried about an epidemic of loneliness."

A pre-pandemic report from the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found that in 2020, one-third of people over the age of 45 reported being lonely, according to Schoeneman-Parker.

Roots of Loneliness

Loneliness can be felt differently depending on the person and their circumstances. Loneliness and social isolation are similar, but are not synonymous. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), loneliness is "the feeling of being alone, regardless of social contact."

Social isolation, on the other hand, is a lack of social connections and can lead to loneliness in some people. Others can feel lonely despite not being socially isolated, according to the CDC.

"When people experience loneliness, there is a perceived gap between the individual's desired connections and actual social relationships," Schoeneman-Parker says. "Keep in mind, people can be alone and not feel lonely."

Grief over the death of a partner, spouse or other close relationship can include loneliness, whether due to the loss of interaction with the person who has died, or to the connections between others that person provided.

And while some people may crave more social connectivity, other factors might make that difficult.

"It can become complicated if an individual is struggling with social anxiety, let's say, and they are very much wanting more social interaction, but the anxiety gets in the way and inhibits them from taking steps to connect with others," Schoeneman-Parker says.

Changes in family or work dynamics can also contribute to loneliness. People with poor physical health and pre-existing mental health conditions also are more likely to be lonely and isolated.

Others may feel lonely despite being connected to others. In that case, they may need to evaluate whether their interests and values have changed, and seek different opportunities for interacting with others.

Schoeneman-Parker stresses that people have different desires when it comes to levels of social interaction.

"There is a range of what people need in terms of social interactions and time being alone by themselves," she says. "We all are social creatures and have social needs. But what an individual needs is going to vary

“Keep in mind, people can be alone and not feel lonely.”

DR. JILL SCHOENEMAN-PARKER
LICENSED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

significantly.”

Among the factors that can influence a person’s desire for social interaction is the holiday season.

Holidays can be times of loneliness and disconnect between one’s expectations and what actually happens, says Schoeneman-Parker. While some people have a wonderful time with family and friends, others may have a different experience within the same environment.

“That could be based on a misalignment of feeling connected to those around them, or there could be tremendous social isolation and loss,” she explains. “Whenever we take an opportunity to gather, whether literally or metaphorically, and we are sitting around the table and noticing all the people there — or who are not there — feelings can easily be stirred up.”

Young People At Risk

Young adults are at the greatest risk and report the highest levels of loneliness, says Schoeneman-Parker.

According to the Surgeon General report, the highest rates of social isolation are found among older adults, but young adults are almost twice as likely to report feeling lonely than those over 65. The rate of loneliness among young adults has increased every year between 1976 and 2019.

During COVID, social distancing kept people apart, but young people who have grown up in an age of digital communication had an easier time connecting remotely. Older adults who did not increase their use of technology during this time missed out on that connection; even those who did increase their use of technology still reported loneliness, Schoeneman-Parker says.

“It is important to remember that learning new tasks is more difficult as we age and, even in the best circumstance, technology is not going to replace all the sensory impact of being in a room with another person,” she adds.

While technology can foster some connection, too much social media can be detrimental. The Surgeon General report references a study in which participants who reported using social media for more than two hours a day had double the chance of reporting an increased perception of social isolation compared to those who used social media for fewer than 30 minutes each day.

In the Classroom

“The Internet and digital technology have revolutionized the way we live, learn and interact with the world,” says Jerry Sparby, an educator with more than five decades of experience as a teacher, counselor and administrator. “However, we must not forget the importance of fostering genuine emotional connections within our houses and communities.”

Sparby stresses the importance of those connections as well as open communication for children.

“Children today are not just influenced by their immediate environment,” he notes. “They are surrounded by a world teeming with noises, distractions and overwhelming

opportunities to disassociate from reality. This phenomenon exacerbates the stress levels of young minds, leading to heightened feelings of anxiety, isolation and loneliness.”

In 2017, Sparby developed the non-profit organization HuddLUp, which features games that foster bonding and connection. The organization has engaged with more than 100 classrooms and introduced 15 to 20 new games each year to be used inside and outside the classroom.

The games help students become involved, build connections and create community within classrooms through play, he says. The organization also provides training on breathing techniques that may reduce stress.

“The modern world places immense stress on parents, teachers and students alike, threatening to dampen the joy of nurturing these connections,” Sparby says. “It is crucial that we address this issue to ensure that relationships remain strong and lifelong bonds are forged between parents, children and teachers.”

Community Connections

The Surgeon General’s advisory and report on loneliness included six pillars to advance social connection. They include strengthening social infrastructure in local communities, enacting pro-connection public policies, mobilizing the health sector, reforming digital environments, deepening knowledge and awareness and building a culture of connection.

For individuals, this might mean participating in social and community groups such as those related to fitness, religion, hobbies and community service. Community groups, according to the report, should also seek to build partnerships with schools, workplaces and other organizations to “create a culture of connection.”

Actively engaging with those who have different backgrounds and experiences is also a recommendation, as is making time for civic engagement like town halls or school board meetings.

“For individuals who may have been struggling with loneliness for a long time, it is easy to have our brains play tricks on us,” says Schoeneman-Parker, who adds that examining feelings of loneliness is important and can help to avoid negative feelings, misperceptions and negative self-talk, as well as a prolonged emotional state like depression or anxiety. “If the struggles persist, reaching out to a professional would be an excellent thing to do.”





The Places You'll Go

A passion for hunting takes
KLN employees into the local
outdoors and beyond

By Kyle Garmes



Kenny's Candy and Confections employee Mark Borah *right* started hunting elk roughly six years ago.

Mark Borah began hunting when he was 20 years old. He was shooting archery with a friend and before he knew it, a passion was born.

Now 48, Borah, a warehouse/logistics manager at Kenny's Candy and Confections in Perham, has hunted deer and elk in a variety of states with his trusty bow and arrow. His adventures have taken him to places including a mountain peak named after an ancestor.

"For me, it's been kind of a godsend to have elk hunting come my way — and when it did," Borah said. "Because it's helped me stay in shape, and I've got something to train for. I think that a big problem that people have a lot of times is they want to stay in shape and maintain their health, but if you don't find a why, you have to have a reason to do it and have something to train for."

Borah appreciates that his shift at Kenny's allows him to head out to hunt in the evening.

He searched for deer the first time he went hunting, and one of his best memories is shooting his first deer with his best

friend, who has since passed away.

Borah, who lives near Detroit Lakes, delved into elk hunting about six years ago, and he has been on hunting trips to Utah, Wyoming and Idaho.

Idaho has become one of his favorite places because it is home to Borah Peak, the tallest mountain in the state. It is named after U.S. Sen. William Borah, who died in 1940 and is Borah's uncle of many generations ago. Mark Borah has never reached the peak of the mountain, but has spent time near its base.

He has found success hunting elsewhere in the state, including shooting a female cow elk alongside five loved ones.

Borah says he was "hooked" on elk hunting after a trip to Utah. One particular thrill, he explains, came when he was out early in the season and tried bugling to attract elk out into the open. Bull elk bugle to attract females.

Despite critics saying it wouldn't work, Borah was stunned to hear an elk bugle back, then see two bulls make their way

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down a mountain and across a big field. It was surreal to see such a majestic animal, he says.

At 65 yards out, he took one of the elk down with a “perfect shot.”

Borah sometimes has to hike dozens of miles to a prime spot, but he enjoys the health benefits of hunting. It’s a chance to forget about the hustle and bustle of life for a few days.

“I know that when I finally get to get out there, I can leave everything behind, and just have time to clear my mind and relax,” he says, “and just enjoy what I’m doing.”

David Jares, who works at Tuffy’s Pet Foods in Perham, enjoys hunting deer, duck and goose.

For Jares, 36, it’s an opportunity to “chill out,” enjoy the outdoors and make memories with family and friends.

He has enjoyed hunting for as long as he can remember, with his nephew, Isaiah, one of his beloved companions.

It takes time, he notes, to set up for the perfect shot to

take down a duck. Jares scouts the terrain in his truck and sets up decoys.

One important aspect, he says, is having the wind at his back. “The wind is a big factor,” he said. “Ducks fly into the wind to land, like a plane.”

Jares mounted a blue goose he killed in Missouri, and he makes jalapeno poppers with duck meat. They’re wrapped in bacon for good measure.

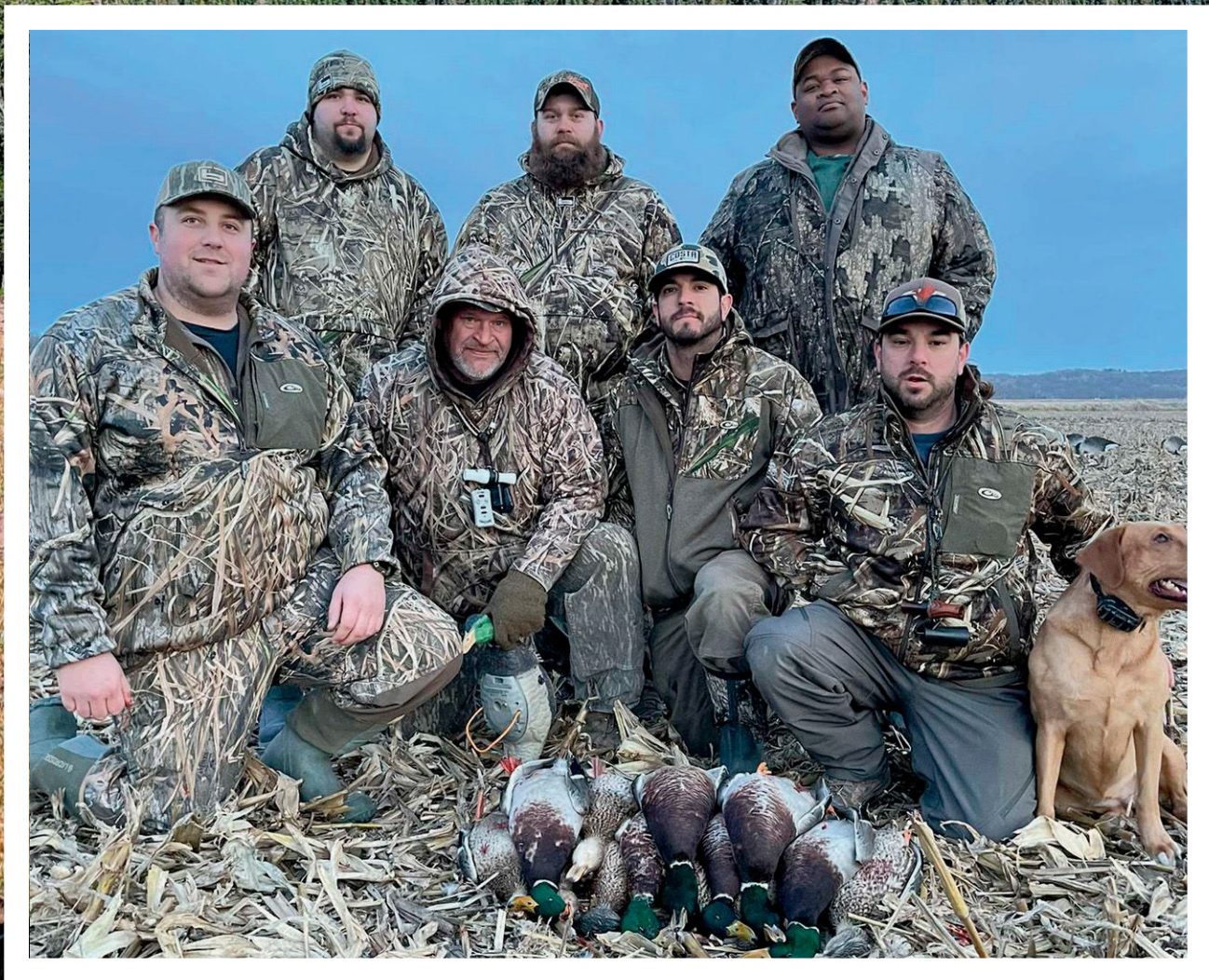
Of course, Borah and Jares both experience some mental and physical strain when out hunting. Those long hikes can be a grind, and they must be focused to the max.

But they love the competitive aspect of it — and the thrill.

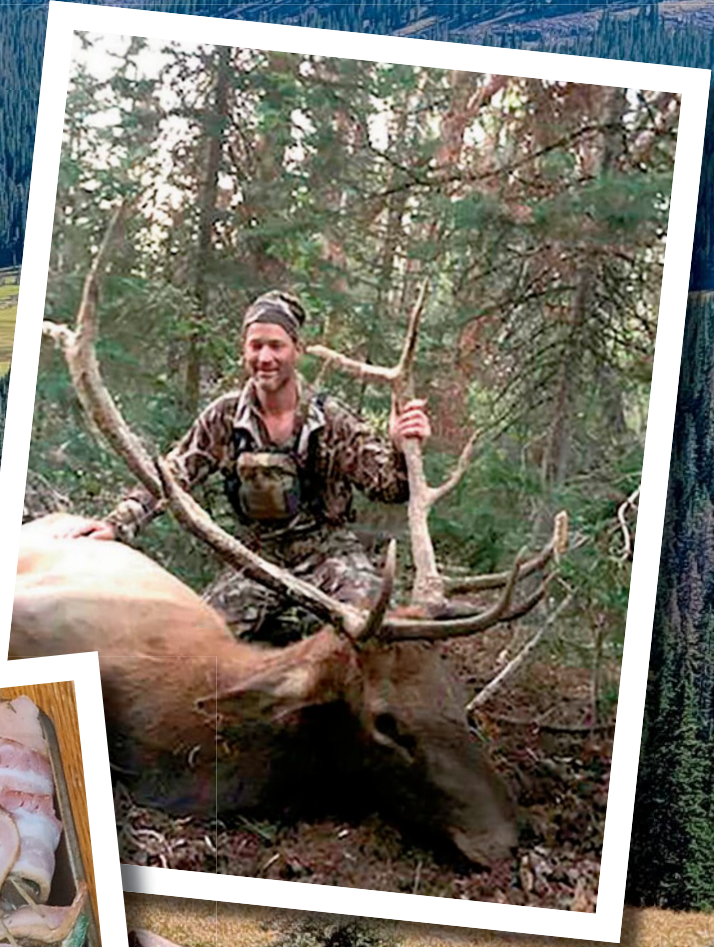
Borah can barely move once he spots an elk, as he has to keep his bow and arrow perfectly steady.

Every last movement must be the right one.

“You’re under a lot of pressure,” Borah says, “to make everything happen.”



David Jares enjoys spending time with friends and relatives while hunting deer, duck and goose.



Above Mark Borah with a trophy buck elk.



Left Jalapeno poppers consisting of duck meat-stuffed peppers wrapped in bacon are one of David Jares' specialty dishes.



DOUBLE Whammy

Renal cancer caught in early stages for Tuffy's employee

By Michael Gilbert

Two years ago, Toby Green went to his doctor due to a case of indigestion that just wouldn't go away.

A CT scan revealed he had diverticulitis, which is an inflammation in the digestive tract, and, according to Green, "something on my kidney that doesn't belong there."

Green's doctor ordered him to visit a specialist to address the growth on his right kidney and in the week leading up to that appointment, the Caldwell, Idaho resident relied on his brother, Johnny, a colon rectal surgeon, for advice.

"I talked to my brother before I went to the specialist and he told me it was most likely a malignant tumor that is going to require surgery," says Green, a territory sales manager with Tuffy's Pet Food. "He didn't come right out and say, 'You have cancer.' He was talking in 'doctor speak' so it didn't really sink in as to exactly what I was facing."

That all changed a week later when Green went to the specialist and she started the visit rather matter-of-factly.

"She just said, 'you're here to see me about your renal cancer,' and that hit me like a ton of bricks," Green says. "My brother came with me to see the specialist and he kind of took over the meeting because all I heard after 'renal cancer' was 'blah blah blah.' I was just so in shock that my mind wasn't there."

Green says the only solace he took in his diagnosis is that renal cancer is treated by physically removing the growth as opposed to radiation.

"I knew I didn't have to have chemo or radiation, so that was the upside," he says. "I still had all the thoughts of 'this is cancer and what does that mean' because the C word is just so overwhelming."

Green underwent surgery to remove the renal cancer a month later at the Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise. During the surgery, the doctor noticed his gallbladder had polyps, which likely would metastasize into cancer, and removed the pear-shaped organ.

"That was kind of a double-whammy," Green says. "I was like 'I have cancer and there's something else wrong with me, too?'"

What made Green's health issues in the fall of 2021 even more stunning is that prior to his diverticulitis and renal cancer diagnosis, he was "completely healthy."

"This honestly came completely out of left field because I didn't have any of the symptoms of renal cancer," he says. "I was a healthy 60-year-old who exercised all the time and ate well. I was doing great."

Green says he is now "doing great" even if the surgery wasn't as smooth sailing as he or his team of doctors would have preferred. Before he went under the knife, Green was informed by his doctors there was a chance they would have to remove his entire kidney because they believed the location of the tumor was near his renal vein.

"The location of the tumor was causing a lot of anxiety for my doctors because they wanted to do a partial nephrectomy and take out only about 25% of my kidney," he says. "Unfortunately, when they went in for the surgery, they learned the renal vein went right through the middle of the tumor and they had to remove the whole kidney."

"The only way to get all the cancer was to take the entire kidney, and that's not ideal because you want to have two kidneys."

Green says the recovery was a bit lengthy, but he is now feeling like his old self.

"I just felt like I was in a fog for the first 30 days," he says. "I was able to get around, but I did need to use a walker because I just didn't have any balance and felt like I couldn't walk without falling over. Sleeping was difficult because it hurt to lay flat, so I slept in a recliner."

"After about 30 days, I was going out of my mind, so I just decided to get up and started doing stuff."

Green says he was able to be active for a few hours before the tiredness set in.

"After about 60 days, I started to feel normal," he says. "I was able to start exercising again after 90 days, but the surgery took a lot out of me."

An avid treadmill walker prior to his surgery, Green says it took 90 days before he was able to get on the machine and another 90 days to return to the 4.5-mile per hour pace he was doing pre-surgery.

"My brother reminds me that I had a catastrophic event inside my body and he's right — I had two organs removed," Green says. "I'm very lucky the renal cancer was caught at an earlier stage and thankful for how I am feeling now."



Toby Green

Grateful for Coverage

Comprehensive care means focusing on healing, not bills

By Michael Gilbert

Toby Green had a lot of questions following his renal cancer surgery that also led to the removal of his gallbladder.

One question that never crossed his mind was "how am I going to pay for this?"

Green knew he had a \$2,500 deductible with his United HealthCare insurance, and that was the entirety of his out-of-pocket expense for the November 2021 surgery.

"I'm very thankful that [KLN CEO] Charlie Nelson offers us a premium health insurance, because as you may imagine, being in the hospital for two days, a major surgery and two surgeons can make for a very expensive bill," Green says.

Without insurance, Green says the surgery would have cost him approximately \$90,000. He also had two CT scans prior to the surgery and will need a total of four more following the procedure. Those scans run \$6,000, but Green says he is only responsible for a \$200 deductible each time.

"Our insurance covers so much," he says. "If you're that sick, it's good to know that our insurance is going to take good care of you."

Green says that "peace of mind" was quite welcome throughout the recovery process.

"When I opened the bill [for the surgery], you go 'oh my gosh' because it is so much, but knowing you have a max out-of-pocket cost allows you to just focus on healing."

Green, 62, notes the cost of surgery was more than double what he and his wife paid for their first home.

"My wife and I paid about \$45,000 for our first house, and this surgery was twice as much," he says. "I have no idea how you can take care of yourself if you don't have health insurance."



Screen SAVERS

Sticking to a mammogram schedule can be a matter of life and death

By Community Health Staff

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the United States, behind skin cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While expert advice for cancer prevention and detection sounds like a new refrain to the same tune — a refrain played by doctors around the country — it is certainly worth repeating.

Screenings. Screenings. Screenings.

As with most problems, procrastinating when it comes to cancer screenings can only lead to more issues down the road.

Doctors stress that catching cancers at Stage 1 and Stage 2 makes a difference, and that's where screenings come in. But survival numbers drop, and symptoms increase as cancers are found in later stages.

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the United States, behind skin cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 240,000 cases are diagnosed each year in women, and about 2,100 in men. About 42,000 women and 500 men die each year from

breast cancer in the U.S.

In 2020, according to the CDC, 119 women per 100,000 were diagnosed with breast cancer, and 19 per 100,000 people died from the disease.

The American College of Radiology recommends all women of average risk start annual mammograms at age 40. Earlier and more intensive screenings are recommended for those at higher risk. All women, according to the organization, should have a risk assessment by age 25 to determine if screening before age 40 is needed.

In addition to mammograms, all women should conduct self-exams monthly.

While it is also possible for men to get breast cancer, the disease affects women in much larger numbers.

Obesity, a lack of physical activity, excessive use of alcohol, diets high in fat and dense breasts also can increase the risk of cancer.

No matter what the risk, staying on top of screenings can be vital.

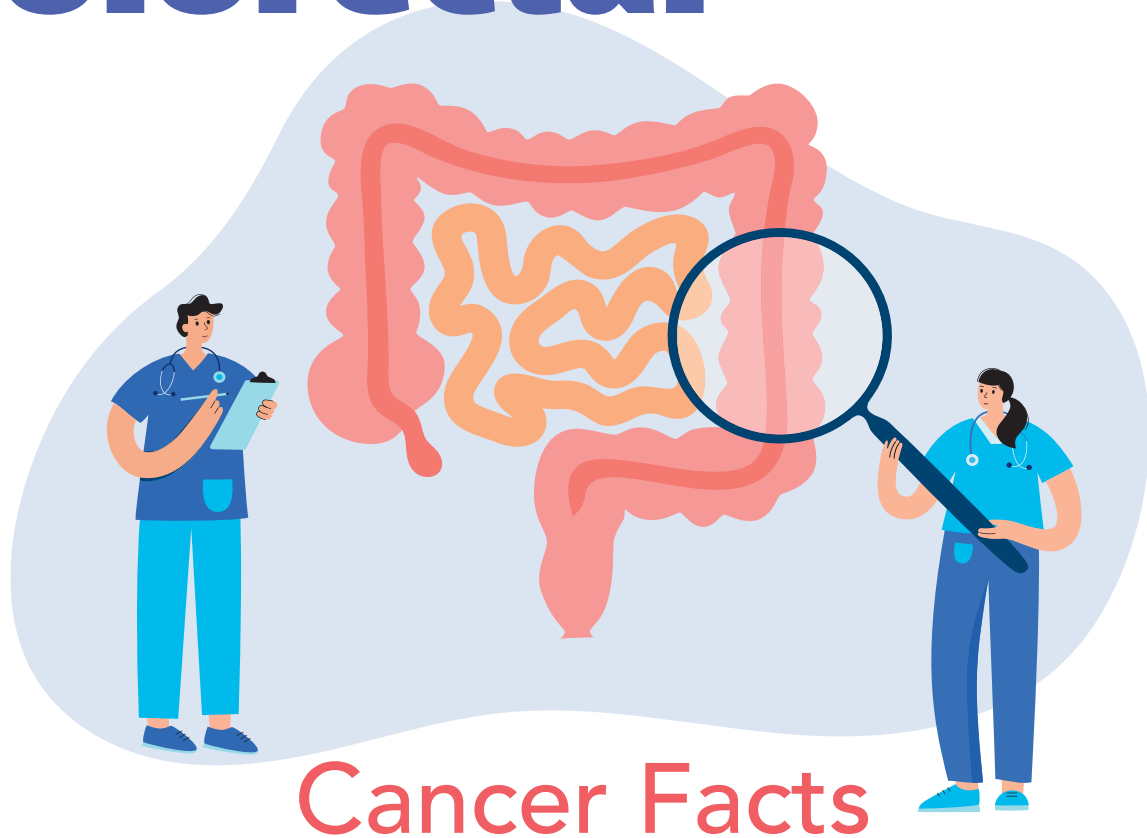
While some people show no symp-

toms, warning signs are a new lump in the breast or armpit; thickening or swelling of part of the breast; irritation or dimpling of breast skin; redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast; pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area; nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood; any change in the size or the shape of the breast; and pain in any area of the breast, according to the CDC.

Symptoms can occur with other conditions that are not cancer, though. People should consult a physician if they are experiencing any issues.

Other risk factors for breast cancer include getting older, genetic mutations, reproductive history, a personal history of breast cancer or certain non-cancerous breast diseases, a family history of breast cancer, previous treatment using radiation therapy, and women who took the drug diethylstilbestrol. There are also changeable risk factors, including taking hormones and drinking alcohol, according to the CDC.

Colorectal



Cancer Facts

Cancers of the colon and rectum are the fourth most prevalent and deadly in the U.S., with 33 people diagnosed for every 100,000, and 13 out of every 100,000 people dying from the cancers, 2020 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show. That year, 126,240 new cases of colon and rectum cancer were reported, and 51,869 people died.

Colon cancer screening recommendations were recently reduced from age 50 to 45 for the average person. The decrease in age for screening largely represent trends in when these types of cancers are most commonly appearing.

When there is a family history, experts recommend starting screening earlier, depending on when the cancer was diagnosed in the family member. That's because colon cancer typically starts as polyps, which take an average of five years to develop into cancer. Catching those early means simpler and more successful treatment.

Several stool tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy and CT colonography may also be screening options, and the CDC recommends patients consult with their physicians about which option is best for them.

Doctors say people should pay special attention if they notice "pencil thin" stool or see any brightness or blood in their stool. The CDC also

notes stomach pain, aches and cramps that stick around, as well as unexplained weight loss and changes in bowel habits as possible signs of colorectal cancer.

Obesity and diets high in fat are also risk factors for colon cancer. Black patients tend to run a higher risk. Underlying conditions, such as irritable bowel syndrome, can increase the percentages as well.

The CDC adds diets high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains that reduce the risk of other chronic diseases may also reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. Low-dose aspirin can help prevent colorectal cancer in some adults. Some studies show that increasing physical activity, limiting alcohol consumption and avoiding tobacco can help reduce risks.

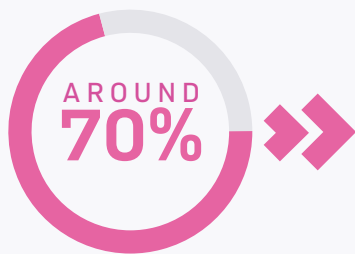
There is good news when it comes to battling colon cancer. In recent years, robotic surgeries have drastically cut down hospital and recovery times — from 1-2 weeks in the hospital to 2-3 days, and months of home recovery down to two weeks. What that means is not just a more comfortable process for patients, but in the unfortunate case that a cancer spreads, it allows physicians to start life-saving treatments such as chemotherapy sooner than they could in the past while waiting for open wounds to heal.

What if

you found cancer early
enough to make a difference



The earlier that cancer can be found, the higher the chance of better outcomes.



of cancer deaths are caused by cancers not commonly screened for.

It is time to look at cancer more broadly. Only 5 cancers have recommended screening. Adding a multi-cancer early detection test can improve the chance of finding cancer early

Introducing the Galleri® test

In partnership with GRAIL, KLN Family Brands is pleased to offer eligible employees the Galleri multi-cancer early detection test at no cost. The Galleri test detects a cancer signal across more than 50 types of cancer, offering the benefits of:



Early cancer detection

Detects a cancer signal shared by many cancers that are not commonly screened for today, to allow for earlier treatment.



Testing with ease

Completed with a simple blood draw.



Actionable results

If a cancer signal is found, the results can predict where in the body the cancer is located to help your healthcare provider guide your next steps.

How the Galleri test works

Through a simple blood draw, the Galleri test looks at DNA in your blood to determine if any of it may have come from cancer cells.

Who is eligible?

The Galleri test is being offered to KLN Family Brands employees aged 50 years or older certain risk factors, per the eligibility criteria determined by KLN Family Brands.

The Galleri test is intended to be **used in addition to, and not replace, other cancer screening tests** your healthcare provider recommends. The test does not measure your genetic risk of developing cancer in the future.



Important Safety Information

The Galleri test is recommended for use in adults with an elevated risk for cancer, such as those aged 50 or older. The Galleri test does not detect all cancers and should be used in addition to routine cancer screening tests recommended by a healthcare provider. Galleri is intended to detect cancer signals and predict where in the body the cancer signal is located. Use of Galleri is not recommended in individuals who are pregnant, 21 years old or younger, or undergoing active cancer treatment. Results should be interpreted by a healthcare provider in the context of medical history, clinical signs and symptoms. A test result of "No Cancer Signal Detected" does not rule out cancer. A test result of "Cancer Signal Detected" requires confirmatory diagnostic evaluation by medically established procedures (e.g. imaging) to confirm cancer. If cancer is not confirmed with further testing, it could mean that cancer is not present or testing was insufficient to detect cancer, including due to the cancer being located in a different part of the body. False-positive (a cancer signal detected when cancer is not present) and false-negative (a cancer signal not detected when cancer is present) test results do occur. Rx only.

The Galleri test has not been cleared or approved by the FDA.

Understanding the results

The Galleri test looks for a signal present in the blood that may be associated with cancer at the time of your blood draw.

There are two possible results from the Galleri test:

— No Cancer Signal Detected

This means that no cancer signal was found; however, not all cancers can be detected by the Galleri test. Be sure to continue with routine recommended cancer screening tests. Missing routine cancer screenings or ignoring symptoms could lead to a delayed diagnosis of cancer.

+ Cancer Signal Detected

This means that there are signals associated with cancer were detected. Your healthcare provider will discuss appropriate follow-up tests to confirm if cancer is present. The Galleri test does not diagnose cancer.

False negative and false positive results do occur.

Visit galleri.com/klfamilybrands to check your eligibility and request the Galleri test.



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Prioritizing Your Health

Women often advocate for others, but also must think of their own care

By Rebecca Fortner

Women are often caregivers for others, whether it be their children, parents or spouse. For many, this means their own health care is delayed or not prioritized. In addition, women may have difficulties finding care that meets their specific needs.



Be Prepared

Some preparation before an appointment can make a difference.

- Write down questions in advance and bring notes to the appointment.
- Track symptoms, medications, dietary changes and sleep habits in the months and weeks prior to the visit if specific examples are needed.
- Bring a trusted friend or family member to listen, contribute to the conversation as needed, and take notes during the appointment.
- Be realistic about the time available and be prepared to schedule follow-up appointments or telehealth visits to ensure all questions are answered.
- Helpful guides are available at [swhr.org](https://www.swhr.org)

These factors put together have consequences. Delaying checkups and screenings, for example, may mean conditions are left undiagnosed and not treated as early as possible. “So often, women are taking on the role of advocate and caregiver for others, but they must not forget to do the same for themselves,” says Katie Schubert, president and CEO of the Society for Women’s Health Research. “If we don’t care for ourselves, we aren’t able to care for others.”

Research Gap

While women must advocate for themselves, other challenges include a historic gender gap in the health care system, including in options, education and research, says Schubert.

Until about 30 years ago, says Schubert, medical research focused solely on men. This exclusion was often based on a fear that research including women would be inaccurate due to hormone levels and menstruation patterns.

“Women were not viewed as much different than tiny men when it came to health, so any conclusion found for men was considered applicable to women as well,” she says. “We know these things to be untrue, but their impacts remain.”

Schubert notes heart attack symptoms as an example. For men, a heart attack may present as an uncomfortable pressure or squeezing of the chest. But for women, the pain can be different, radiating or non-radiating, and research shows more than 40% of women say they did not experience chest pain during a heart attack. Providers must consider the differences when making a diagnosis.

This also plays out in funding.

Schubert cites the funding allocated for research about endometriosis as an example. In 2022, the National Institutes of Health budget allocated \$2 per patient annually for this research. Endometriosis impacts about 11% of women between the ages of 15 and 44.

In contrast, diabetes research — which impacts a similar number of women, but also men — received \$31.30 per patient per year.

“This gap has impacted medical education, research funding and treatment innovations,” says Schubert. “With women historically left out of medical research and education, some providers might not know what they don’t know when it comes to women’s health.”

Moving Forward

Including more women in all levels of scientific research and in the medical field is one step toward addressing the gap, says Schubert.

“Women may feel more confident or find it easier to join a trial if those running it look like them,” she explains. “Women may be more comfortable opening up about symptoms if their care provider looks like them. Women may be more interested in coming in for follow-up appointments if their medical staff looks like them.”

It is not uncommon, Schubert says, for women to seek out several providers and appointments before having a condition properly diagnosed. She stresses “the power of a second opinion,” and that a different provider should be sought if questions aren’t being answered.

“Look for providers that answer your questions clearly, make you feel comfortable, and function as a trusted health care advocate,” she says. “It may be helpful to ask friends and family if they have trusted providers, or to visit patient advocacy search tools and lists as references when seeking new providers.”

Act Naturally

Exercise, diet and rest
are the cornerstones of
a strong immune system

By Community Health Staff





When cold and flu season arrives, the question of prevention comes with it. A flu shot is recommended, of course, but there are additional ways to fortify your immune system, beginning with several pillars of overall health, like exercise, diet and adequate rest.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a study of more than 500,000 adults found those who met physical activity guidelines — 150 minutes each week of moderate-intensity physical activity, along with two days of muscle strengthening — were about half as likely to die from flu and pneumonia as those who didn't meet those guidelines.

Exercise, along with a healthy diet, stress reduction and adequate rest, can also help maintain a healthy weight. Obesity, which is defined as a body mass index of 30 or higher in adults, can negatively affect immune system function, and may also make vaccines for certain diseases less effective.

A healthy diet also plays a role in immune system function and overall health. This includes fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C and E, beta-carotene and zinc. So-called “superfoods,” like kale, broccoli, avocado and berries, are a great component to a healthy diet, as

well as lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. Limiting saturated fats, salt, added sugars and cholesterol is also key.

A good method to relieve stress can also help keep the immune system healthy as stress and anxiety can suppress its function. Social interaction, staying active and incorporating an activity like yoga as well as meditation can all help to alleviate stress, which is linked to heart and digestive issues.

Adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night, according to the CDC, and just like adequate rest helps to maintain a healthy weight and overall health, it also fuels the immune system, helping the body respond to stress and inflammation.

Quality sleep is essential. Poor sleep may appear in symptoms like not feeling rested even after an adequate number of hours, repeatedly waking up and snoring or gasping for air, which may signal a sleep disorder.

There are plenty of “do’s” when it comes to helping the immune system, but also a few things to avoid. They include smoking, which can increase risks for problems, including rheumatoid arthritis, says the CDC. Too much alcohol can also weaken the immune system.

Wellness Challenges

**TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH!
JOIN US AND FINISH THE YEAR STRONG.**

Gratitude Challenge

Make time to recognize the good things in your life and express thanks for them.

November 1 - 20th



Hold it for the **HOLIDAYS**



**Hold yourself accountable \$10
this holiday season! ENTRY FEE**

Can you maintain weight during the mad hustle and bustle between Thanksgiving and New Years?

Weigh-ins mid November and early January.

Keep the pounds off and you'll get your \$10 back!
Gain Weight and your \$10 goes to the "Biggest Loser"

November 20 - January 2



MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

Holiday Game Plan

Pros recommend advance planning for seasonal spending

By Michael Gilbert



Ben Bathke



Casey Nelson



Giving the perfect holiday gift can, in many ways, bring as much joy as being the recipient.

But without proper budgeting, those smiles can turn to frowns when the credit card or bank statement arrives.

Thankfully, with a little planning and preparation, the holidays can be celebrated and not dreaded financially.

Ben Bathke and Casey Nelson, financial planners who service the KLN 401K, recommend developing a budget before heading to the mall or online to shop.

“Regardless of what you’re spending for the holidays, make sure everything is on a written budget,” say Bathke and Nelson. “If you’re not tracking what you’re spending, it makes it pretty easy to run up your credit card bill or have your checking account dwindle.”

“You can’t keep swiping your card blind and expect a different result.”

Bathke and Nelson say there isn’t a steadfast “rule” on the percentage of one’s income that should be used on holiday gifts since financial situations and the number of gifts needed differ.

“The amount people spend varies for everyone so it’s difficult to put a percentage on how much you should spend,” the duo says. “If you know Christmas spending is going to be an issue, then we recommend setting an amount you’re willing to spend and working backwards. If you know you are going to be spending \$500, start saving \$100 a month beginning in August.”

“Having a ‘Secret Santa’ or grab bag are also good ways to involve a lot of people without having to purchase multiple gifts.”

Bathke and Nelson say a common downfall is when an individual tries too hard to impress and winds up spending beyond their budget.

“Holiday shopping can be a lot like the stock market in that you can do a lot wrong if you let your emotions get in the way,” according to Bathke and Nelson. “Overextending your budget to try to impress will end up causing you a lot of stress in January and the following months when you’re trying to balance your checkbook.”

In addition to writing a budget, Bathke and Nelson also encourage people to jot down the gifts they intend to purchase so they have a better understanding of the amount they are likely to spend.

“[Writing down potential gifts] is especially important for married couples, because they need to be on the same page when it comes to finances and agree on a spending limit and stick to it,” the duo says. “If you have three kids and want the cost of the gifts to be equal, then agree to an amount that works for your finances.”

The ease of online shopping and even cashless transactions in retail stores can make “impulse buys” a much more frequent occurrence. In an effort to prevent impulse purchases, Bathke and Nelson recommend waiting around 48 hours before making large purchases.

“You may be real excited about something, but then if you sleep on it, you might realize you didn’t need it at all, so it’s a good idea to give it a day or two,” Bathke and Nelson say. “A lot of times people put financial stress on themselves because they buy something they didn’t necessarily need or want.”

Many KLN employees are well aware of the company’s quarterly profit-sharing checks. Bathke and Nelson both noted these checks can really come in handy come holiday time if proper planning is used.

“We know several KLN employees who have been successful in the past with their holiday budgeting by taking a little chunk of that profit sharing out each quarter and tossing it in a nice little savings account for Christmas,” Bathke and Nelson say. “That is a great tool to use to make the holiday spending less stressful. We recommend not waiting [to save] until the last quarterly profit-sharing check, just in case the check isn’t what you were expecting. If you are living comfortably off your regular check, then your profit-sharing check can be used on Christmas or something else fun.”

“Having a gameplan for spending is a very important part of the holiday season.”



Less is More

Overscheduling may contribute to stress and anxiety



By Michael Gilbert

Overscheduling may seem like the right thing to do to impress supervisors and colleagues, but there's a big difference between cramming too much into our lives and working hard.

In fact, overscheduling can be one of the biggest mistakes when it comes to planning and can actually wreak havoc on one's

schedule and even their life.

So why then do so many people have a full calendar? There is no simple answer.

Deborah Vinall, a licensed mental health therapist and doctor of psychology with the California-based Tamar Counseling Services, believes people overbook themselves "in order to feel significant."



“People often fall into the trap of overscheduling because they have a people-pleasing mentality wherein they struggle to set boundaries,” Vinall says. “Some begin with full lives due to economic demands to work many hours, and a sense of obligation or guilt layered on top leads them to continue to overschedule rather than prioritizing rest and relaxation.”

Psychotherapist Jason Shiers says he has encountered many individuals who opt to overschedule due to a “fear of missing out.”

“I believe there are a variety of reasons, including the fear of missing out,” says

Shiers, who works for United Recovery California. “People also overschedule based on the idea that being busy equals success and pleasure and the pressure to live up to others’ standards of living. People may strive to cram too much into their days or lives, but the problem is overscheduling may not result in enjoyment and instead contribute to burnout, tension and worry.”

Feeling like one has something to prove — either to themselves or others — is one reason why clinical social worker Steve Carleton, of the Phoenix-based Gallus Detox, believes people overschedule.

“Some might think that by having a full schedule and staying constantly busy they will be seen as successful or important,” Carleton says. “In other cases, it could simply be a fear of missing out on opportunities or experiences. Maybe they think that if they don’t make the most of their life, then something important could pass them by. And for some, it could be because of anxiety or pressure — maybe they had a set, strict timeline in their head on how life should go and feel like if they don’t keep up with it, everything will fall apart.”

Carleton warns that pursuing a fulfilling and meaningful lifestyle does not necessarily require constantly being busy or having an overly full schedule.

“Happiness and contentment are not always found by doing more, but in the quality of experiences that we have,” he says. “So rather than trying to fill up your days with too much activity, it may be more beneficial to focus on pursuing activities that you truly enjoy and that bring you joy. That way, you can make the most out of life without sacrificing your own happiness.”

Overscheduling is not solely a problem for adults. It can cause issues for children as well, and Shiers cautions parents about putting too much on their child’s plate.

“Overscheduling by parents can have a negative impact on the emotional and physical health of their children,” Shiers says. “Children who are overscheduled may experience tension, anxiety and overload. It could also result in a lack of opportunities for self-reflection, unstructured play and relaxation, all of which are essential for a child’s healthy growth.”

Shiers adds when parents overschedule their child it may put a strain on the parent-child bond since parents may get too preoccupied with their children’s activities and overlook other crucial facets of their bond.

“It’s important for parents to strike a balance between planned activities and free time, and to put their kids’ needs ahead of their own or society’s expectations,” he says.

Carleton echoes Shiers’ comments and

believes overscheduling can be detrimental to youngsters just like it can be for adults.

“Down-time is very important for children and their developing brains,” he says. “While there are many benefits to the activities children may be offered, the trade-off is a loss of free, creative time. Self-directed play is the mechanism through which developing brains learn the crucial tasks of organization and self-management, essential skills for school, work, and life. Allowing boredom facilitates space for creativity to arise.”

He adds that overscheduling can also lead to a loss of sufficient time for sleep, which can impact attitude as well as academics.

“This may bring on mood dysregulation, decreased flexibility and resilience, poorer academic functioning and increased social struggles,” Carleton says.

Parents who overschedule their children may not only be negatively impacting them now, but it may cause problems in adulthood as well, says New Jersey-based licensed clinician Megan Tangradi.

“When children don’t have enough leisure time to relax and explore their own interests, they can become overwhelmed and stressed,” Tangradi says. “They need time to process their emotions and explore their own passions or interests. Overscheduling can result in a lack of time to develop healthy social relationships with other children, which can lead to problems in adulthood such as difficulty forming meaningful connections. When you don’t take pauses, this can lead to exhaustion and an overall feeling of unhappiness.”

Fall Into Flavor

Mix it up with sweet and savory eats



Southwest Sweet Potato, Black Bean and Rice Skillet

Ingredients

1 Tbsp olive oil
2 cups peeled and diced sweet potato
1 1/2 tsp chili powder
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp dried oregano
1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1/4 tsp garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste
4 ounces diced green chiles
1/2 cup salsa or salsa verde
2 cups cooked brown rice
15-ounce can low-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
2 Tbsp chopped cilantro
Juice of a lime
1/2 cup shredded cheddar, Colby Jack or Monterey Jack cheese

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add diced sweet potatoes, salt and pepper and sauté over medium heat for about 8 minutes. Add 3-4 tablespoons of water to the skillet and cover with lid. Let the sweet potatoes steam until they're fork tender, about another 4 minutes depending on size.
2. Add the green chiles, black beans, rice, spices, salsa, cilantro, lime juice, salt and pepper to the skillet. Stir together until combined.
3. Add the shredded cheese to the top and cover the skillet with lid. Let everything cook for another 3-4 minutes until the cheese is melted and everything is warm. Serve topped with additional cilantro, avocado and plain Greek yogurt or sour cream, if desired.

Pumpkin Muffins

Ingredients

1 cup pumpkin puree
1/2 cup coconut oil, melted
2 eggs
1/3 cup maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups oat flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
Optional: chocolate chips/chopped pecans, about 1 cup.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a muffin tin with liners and nonstick spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk pumpkin, coconut oil, eggs, maple syrup and vanilla until well combined.
3. In a small bowl, mix oat flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet and stir until combined. Stir in any mix-ins.
5. Scoop into muffin tin and bake for about 22 minutes or until toothpick inserted comes out clean.





Healthy Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 10 ounce cremini baby bella mushrooms
- 1 cup diced carrots, about 3 medium
- 1/2 cup diced celery, about 1 large stalk
- 1 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups unsweetened almond milk
- 2 cups cooked and shredded boneless, skinless chicken breasts, about 8 ounces or 2 small breasts
- 1/2 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup frozen pearl onions
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 1 prepared pie crust
- 1 egg lightly beaten with 1 Tbsp water to create an egg wash

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Lightly coat a 9-inch pie dish with baking spray. Set aside.
2. Heat a large Dutch oven or similar deep, heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat. Add the oil to the pan. Once hot, add the mushrooms and cook for 8 minutes, until mushrooms are beginning to brown, stirring occasionally. Add carrots, celery, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Cook until the mushrooms have browned more deeply and the carrots begin to soften, about 3 additional minutes.
3. Sprinkle flour over the top of the vegetables and cook 2 minutes. Slowly pour in the almond milk, adding a few splashes at a time, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, scraping any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Continue to let bubble until thickened, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the chicken, peas, onions and thyme. Spoon the chicken mixture into the prepared pie dish.
4. Roll the pie dough into a circle large enough to cover your dish. Brush the edges of the pie dish with the egg wash, then lay the dough over the top so that it hangs over the sides. Trim the overhang to a half inch larger than the edge of the dish. Gently press the dough onto the sides of the dish so that it sticks, then brush all over with remaining egg wash. With a sharp knife, cut several slits in the top.
5. Bake until hot and bubbly on the inside and the crust is deeply golden, about 25 minutes. Let rest several minutes. Serve hot.

Simple Mushroom Barley Soup

Ingredients

- Extra virgin olive oil
- 16 ounce baby bella mushrooms, cleaned well and halved or sliced
- Kosher salt
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 8 ounce white mushrooms, cleaned and chopped
- 1/2 cup canned crushed tomatoes
- Black pepper
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1/2 tsp to 3/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 6 cups low-sodium broth (vegetable or beef)
- 1 cup pearl barley rinsed
- 1/2 cup packed chopped parsley

Directions

1. In a large Dutch Oven, heat extra virgin olive oil over medium-high heat until shimmering but not smoking. Add baby bella mushrooms and cook until mushrooms soften and gain some color (about 5 minutes or so). Remove from the pot and set aside for now.
2. In the same pot, add a little more extra virgin olive oil. Add onions, garlic, celery, carrots, and chopped white mushrooms. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes over medium-high heat. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Now, add crushed tomatoes and spices (coriander, smoked paprika, cumin). Cook for 3 minutes or so, tossing regularly.
4. Add broth and pearl barley. Bring to a rolling boil for 5 minutes, then turn heat down. Cover and let simmer over low heat for about 30 minutes or until the barley is tender and cooked through.
5. Add the cooked bella mushrooms back to the pot and stir to combine. Cook for about 5 minutes or so until mushrooms are well warmed through.
6. Finish with fresh parsley. Transfer to serving bowls and enjoy.



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