

Snow Way | 3

Chill Out | 4

Dancing Queen | 13

Community Health

COMMUNITYHEALTHMAGAZINE.COM | WINTER 2025

Canine Comfort

Furry companion eases kids' stays
at Sanford Children's Hospital

PAGE 8



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

It's okay to ask for help.

- LEGAL
- GRIEF
- MENTAL ILLNESS
- EMOTIONAL HEALTH
- DRUG & ALCOHOL
- RELATIONSHIP ISSUES



Call: 1-800-627-8220

www.VillageEAP.com Password: VillageEAP



COVER STORY

Dr. Doggy

8 Fox the facility dog delivers smiles and comfort to kids and their families at Sanford Children's Hospital.

Dashing Through the Snow

3 Travis Gottschalk takes pride in restoring antique snowmobiles.



COMMUNITY

Better Bones

10 A heightened risk of developing osteoporosis prompted KLN's Cris Oehler to adopt healthier habits.



Fit to Dance

12 Tuffy's Pet Foods employee Mariana Diaz shares her life's passion with others as a dance instructor.

MORE

- 4 WINTER WARM-UP
- 18 KEEP IT MOVING
- 20 SEASONAL RECIPES
- 22 HABIT HOW-TOS

Winter Wellness

Happy New Year! We hope you had a safe, fun, and healthy holiday season participating in all your favorite traditions and activities. KLN Family Brands prides itself on putting people first and this magazine is part of that effort, along with providing resources available through the KLN company health plan. Our goal is to provide helpful information to inspire you on your wellness journey.

This edition is full of a variety of topics and features some of our very own KLN employees! Take time to read and talk to them about their passions. It is always fascinating to learn about the wide variety of interests and hobbies that keep everyone busy outside of work.

My family and I were excited to be able to enjoy the Perham sledding hill, an adventure we missed last year with the limited snow. Another thing that keeps my family moving during these cold months is taking advantage of all that the Perham Area Community Center has to offer. Throughout the rest of the winter, we keep busy with basketball and wrestling.

We would love to hear more stories about our employees' health, wellness, and interests. If you have something to share — a workout regime, goals you are working towards or have met, or places to enjoy the outdoors, just to name a few — please email me at mmoch@klnfamilybrands.com.

We hope you can resonate with this edition of *Community Health*. Enjoy winter, get out and appreciate all that the season has to offer. We will be back with another info-packed issue this spring.



Marni Moch
WELLNESS COORDINATOR
KLN FAMILY BRANDS

It is always fascinating to learn about the wide variety of interests and hobbies that keep everyone busy outside of work.



KLN FAMILY BRANDS EDITORIAL BOARD

MARNI MOCH
WELLNESS COORDINATOR

CRIS OEHLER
KLN BOARD MEMBER

SHELBY KALINA
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE GROUP

Larry Perrotto | CHAIRMAN

Mark Hornung | MANAGING DIRECTOR

Tyler Couty | VP OF DIGITAL OPERATIONS

Courtney Weed | DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES

Jason Maholy | EDITOR

Rebecca Fortner | EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Joe Zannelli | GRAPHIC DESIGNER

1550 S. Indiana Ave., Chicago, IL 60605
jason@communityhealthmagazine.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | Send comments, letters, story suggestions and photos relating to your local health news to jason@communityhealthmagazine.com.

This magazine and its content are for general consumer educational use only. Nothing contained in this magazine is or should be considered or used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment by a licensed medical practitioner. As always, please consult your physician. *Community Health* magazine content is published to educate consumers about health care and medical issues that may affect their daily lives. As always, please consult your physician.

COMMUNITY HEALTH is published quarterly by Community Magazine Group, 1550 S. Indiana Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605.

Dashing through the snow



Travis Gottschalk and his family share a passion for snowmobiling.

By Jeff Vorva

Travis Gottschalk loves the thrill of snowmobiling, but he also has a keen interest in the history of snowmobiles. His father, Scott, and brother, Trevor, run Gottschalk Family Antique Snowmobile Museum in Kimball.

What began as a passion for restoring and displaying old tractors evolved into a passion for snowmobiles as well.

“It was something we enjoyed and we started getting into that,” Travis, a production manager at Tuffy’s Treat Company, says of collecting snowmobiles. “We found an antique snowmobile in Pequot Lakes in Minnesota and there were more 1960s snowmobiles up there. We got 10 and then we got a couple hundred, and here we sit.”

It sits well with Travis that he gets to interact with likeminded people who share the same passion and interests. That’s what paved this path for the Gottschalks.

“We love talking with people and sharing history,” Travis says. “When you went from horses to tractors, there were no computers to help you design it. You just fought through it and designed the tractor and hopefully it works, and if it didn’t, you redesign it.”

Travis is credited with putting in many hours to restore a 1954 home-built snowmobile, a project he completed in 2017.

When away from KLN and from the museum, Travis loves to snowmobile across Minnesota. He has also been to Wyoming for some big-time riding, but staying home and riding is a great option.

“There are thousands of miles of snowmobile trails in Minnesota, and one connects right on to our property so we can go right from there and go pretty much anywhere there is snow,” he says. “Minnesota has beautiful trails.”



Cold Calls

Whether you embrace ice-olation or exercise with others, warm your body and senses while savoring winter's charm

By Suzanne Cohen

The warmer months offer many enjoyable ways to stay fit outdoors. But even in chilly weather conditions, there are many activities to burn calories, boost endurance and connect with nature. Sports like cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, running, cycling or hiking are just some. When we may be cooped up inside, exercising outdoors can lower stress and anxiety, improve mood and increase vitamin D levels. And studies show exercising outside in the cold weather helps burn more calories because your immune system works harder to warm your body while maintaining an elevated heart rate.

Cross-country skiing

This low-impact, full-body sport engages nearly every muscle group. Cross-country skiing's fluid, gliding motions strengthen the entire body. Gliding engages core muscles, especially the obliques, and laterally stabilizes hips. Shifting your weight and using narrow skis challenges and improves balance. Unlike high-impact exercises, it's gentle on the joints — especially hips, knees and ankles. And if you use poles to help propel forward, you'll strengthen your shoulders, triceps, biceps and back. Choose between groomed trails, frozen lakes or tougher, unmarked trails, such as on a mountain slope.

Janka Flaska has cross-country skied for 20 years.

"I love it," she says. "It's great exercise and a way to get outside without the hassle of driving to the mountains to ski downhill. I can connect with friends in nature. And it's affordable."

Calories burned: 413-838/hour

Snowshoeing

In 2023, about 4.5 million people in the U.S. snowshoed, according to Statista. Regular participants say, "If you can walk, you can snowshoe."

This activity engages your calf muscles, quads, hamstrings and core. If you use poles, it also fires up your shoulders and back. Gentle on the knees and joints — with the snow acting as a cushion — snowshoeing is easy to learn, affordable and a great cardiovascular workout for the whole family. Focusing on strength, endurance and core muscle enhancement, this low-

impact activity burns up to twice as many calories as walking at the same pace.

Snowshoe guide John Laughlin loves the sport's meditative aspect.

"It's exhilarating and rejuvenating," he says. "Sometimes I just stop to recharge and enjoy the silence. You can make it as easy or intense as you want, without the impact, and you'll get in shape fast."

Calories burned: 400-600/hour

Running

Running is a high-impact, full-body sport that requires minimal equipment, just running shoes and a headlamp or reflective vest if dark outside. You can run almost anywhere. Key muscles used include quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, glutes, hip flexors and core, plus arms and shoulders for momentum and balance. Running boosts endurance, strengthens bones and muscles and improves balance.

Podiatrist Tim Maiden notes many runners land on their heels first, which can create impact equivalent to two to three times their body weight hitting the ground with each step. This intense impact can increase injury risk from the foot to the hip. If you move to a forefoot or midfoot strike, impact is distributed more evenly, lessening injury risk.

Many love it for the mental as well as physical workout it can provide.

"Running is a solo sport," says avid road and trail runner Mandy Valentine. "It's your own mind and energy that push you, and you get to enjoy the beauty of nature. I love how invigorating and powerful I feel when running."

Calories burned: 446-783/hour

Cycling

Cycling is a low-impact exercise that easily shifts from indoor riding on a stationary bike in inclement weather to outdoor riding on dry winter days or in the spring. It can foster camaraderie if you ride with friends or be more meditative if



you ride alone. More eco-friendly than driving, it builds lower-body strength while being gentle on the knees, back and ankles.

Cycling increases stamina, strengthens lower-body muscles (quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves) and engages the biceps, triceps, forearms and core. Potential benefits include improved cardiovascular health and weight loss. Consider riding an electric bike or e-bike for less stress on your joints.

Road- and mountain-biking enthusiast Greg Biegen finds cycling “fun, challenging and breathtaking — in terms of exertion and the views.” He adds, “I love being outside, feeling the wind on my face and seeing beautiful scenery. It’s relaxing and comforting, even when it’s very cardio intensive.”

Calories burned: 250-800/hour

Hiking

Hiking combines cardio, low-impact exercise and resistance training using your own body weight, which helps boost your stamina and improve your mental health. It’s easy to hike alone or enjoy conversation with friends or family during your outing. According to Washington Trails Association, walking on uneven terrain, like on hiking trails, can burn 28% more calories than on flat ground. Whether you stick to level ground or climb, scramble on rocks or ascend a hill or mountain, you’ll activate your quads, hamstrings, calves, glutes, hips and abdominals. Using trekking poles transfers some of the load from your knees to your arms.

Avid hiker Juliet Berzsenyi looks forward to the sport’s social aspect.

“It allows me to escape from the city and enjoy the scenery, great company and the journey while working out,” she says.

Calories burned: 354-558/hour



Put It On Ice

A winter activity growing in popularity, ice fishing involves dropping a line through an opening in the ice of a frozen body of water to catch fish below the surface.

Because several people can fish at a single hole at the same time, you’ll enjoy each other’s company and conversation. If you’re taking in nature’s beauty alone, this meditative state lowers stress and encourages mindfulness.

If you cook and eat the fish you catch, you can improve your heart and brain health and lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. Fish is a high-quality protein, low in saturated fat and high in omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon and trout are top choices.

Brian “Bro” Brosdahl, pro fisherman and influencer, has ice fished for 52 years.

“Ice fishing centers your soul,” he says, adding that safety precautions should be taken seriously. “I feel more alive. It’s about camaraderie and can be an escape. In a world of distractions, ice fishing is something to do that has nothing to do with life’s daily stress.”

Calories burned: 118-163/hour if sitting; more if clearing ice, drilling multiple holes or hauling a sled.

Mark Your Calendar

Kick 2025 off with a variety of activities throughout the area

By Suzanne Cohen

The weather may be chilly, but there's lots to do — inside and out — from ice fishing and crafts to polar plunging and home shows.

Ottertail Polar Plunge

Feb. 1, noon

Ottertail Lake Public Boat Landing

The Ottertail Polar Plunge has raised over \$433,000 for Special Olympics Minnesota in its five-year history. All funds help provide training and services to thousands of athletes with intellectual disabilities across the state. The event is presented by Law Enforcement Torch Run, a movement of volunteers dedicated to increasing awareness and funds for Special Olympics Minnesota. Register at reg.plungemn.org.

Youth Nordic Ski Club

Feb. 6 and 13, 4:15-5:30

Ney Nature Center, 28238 Nature Center Ln., Henderson

Join the Youth Nordic Ski Club and experience the thrill of gliding through the snow. Perfect for those ages 8-14 who want to learn or improve their Nordic skiing skills. Participants will receive instruction on proper technique, balance and endurance. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members and includes equipment rental. Visit ney-nature-center.square.site for information.

Art for Lunch: Folk Art

Feb. 13, noon-1 p.m.

New York Mills Regional Cultural Center, 24 N. Main Ave.

Hungry for creativity? Grab Art for Lunch! Every second Thursday of the month, Cultural Center Artistic Director

Cheryl Bannes leads this class, which is designed to introduce new art materials and processes. The \$10 cost covers materials. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch. The Center will provide beverages. Learn more at kulcher.org/art-for-lunch-fall-2024-spring-2025.

WILD Workshop: Ice Fishing

Feb. 22, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.,

Osprey Wilds, 54165 Audubon Drive, Sandstone

Join Education Director Nadine Meyer as she teaches you how to make your own ice fishing jiggle stick, practice ice and winter safety and learn how fish survive the winter. Children ages 4 and up will make jiggle sticks; those under age 4 are welcome to attend for free. Register at ospreywilds.org/event/wild-workshop-ice-fishing-2.

Winter Garden College

March 3, 5-7 p.m.

Fergus Falls Public Library, 205 E. Hampden Ave.

Have a green thumb? Enjoy a deep dive into garden and small-scale farming topics. Learn how cover crops improve soil health by preventing erosion, providing nutrients and feeding beneficial microbes. Find details at extension.umn.edu

The Lakes Area Home and Cabin Show

March 8, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Perham Area Community Center, 620 3rd Ave. SE

Talk “cabin” with dozens of vendors selling new furnishings and products for your getaway home. There will be door prizes and giveaways. Visit perham.com/homeandcabinshow for details.



Buckthorn Hiking Sticks

March 9, 1-5 p.m.

Robert Ney Regional Park, 5212 73rd St. NE, Maple Lake

Choose from two sessions, one for families and the other for adults. This class will teach how to select, cut and create a buckthorn hiking stick. Participants will also have the opportunity to identify buckthorn shrubs and learn why it's essential to remove them from the park system. Find information at mnwrightcountyweb.myvscloud.com

The Gathering

April 11-13, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (hours vary)

Perham Area Community Center, 620 3rd Ave. SE

The Gathering's 26th annual show features art, sporting collectibles and duck decoys. It's also the world's largest fish decoy show. The National Fish Decoy Association's carving contest showcases the creative spirit driving these talented artists. Visit nfdadecoys.org for information.

Maple Syrup Fest

April 12, 8 a.m.

Vergas Event Center, 140 W. Linden St., Vergas

Celebrate spring with a pancake breakfast fundraiser, vendor fair, 5K, live music, horse-drawn wagon rides, face painting and scavenger hunt. Find details at cityofvergas.com.

Acton Children's Business Fair

April 6, 2-4 p.m.,

Perham Area Community Center, 620 3rd Ave. SE

More than 50 child vendors will bring their supplies and sell homemade items. Visit childrensbusinessfair.org for more information.



Black History Month events offer opportunities to learn and celebrate

By Suzanne Cohen



February offers a full schedule of events in honor of Black History Month. Choose from musical, literary and genealogy activities.

Black History Month Dinner

Feb. 8, 5-9 p.m.

Brooklyn Park Activity Center, 5600 85th Ave. N Minneapolis

This night of celebration and community is a wonderful opportunity to honor and learn about African Americans' rich history and achievements. Enjoy live music, engaging speakers and a delicious dinner. For more information, visit lnadvocate.org/BHMDinnerSponsorship.

Discovering African American Roots

Feb. 22, 6-8p

MAAHMG, 1256 Penn Ave. N Minneapolis

Dive into the world of genealogy with professional genealogist Mica Anders. She'll introduce tools needed to begin a family history journey, highlight uniquely African American sources and help uncover your family's stories to honor their legacy. Register at maahmg.org/event/genealogy.

PUPPY Love

SANFORD

Children's





Therapy dog brings calm and comfort to Sanford Children’s Hospital

By Jeff Vorva

Fox, a 2-year-old golden retriever, looks like he is ready for a snooze.

That’s fine. That’s his job. And it’s hard work.

Fox is a facility dog at Sanford Children’s Hospital in Fargo, and among his many tasks is providing a calming presence for patients and staff.

“They get to pet him and feel how soft he is — he is a picture-perfect golden retriever,” says Katy Easter, the hospital’s lead child specialist and facility-dog handler. “He’s just so calm and comforting.

“He looks kind of sleepy, but that’s just him in work mode. It looks like he is lazy, but he is working.”

Fox came to the hospital last July after completing a week of training at Canine Assistants in Milton, Ga., a suburb of

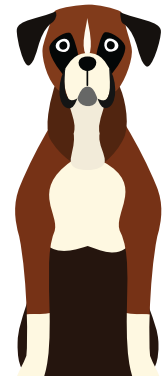
Atlanta. Easter and Stephanie Nelson, the hospital’s child life specialist, were his training partners.

“We met Fox on a Monday and from there on, he was with us in our hotel room and we were really building that bond and that relationship,” Easter says. “We flew back to Fargo with Fox and he went to work.”

Fox usually has a positive effect on people upon entering a room. The mood of a child who is ill, in pain or upset can instantly change to one of joy.

“When we knock on the door and have Fox with us, I would say that 99.9% of the time, you see the patient’s face light up,” Easter says. “And the family lights up because they see how happy their child is.”

NutriSource is proud to support Fox as he continues to provide comfort and care to patients and families during their time at Sanford. Fox is only one of the many facility dogs supported by NutriSource across the nation.



Strong & Sturdy

Diet and exercise can make
or break our bone health

By Karen Marley

The phrase “good bones” is often used to describe a sturdy structure. But taken literally, the structure in question becomes the human body. Choices we make — like what we eat and how active we are — play a large role in bone health.

Structural Health

Sam Dyer, president of Physician Assistants in Orthopaedic Surgery, describes good bone health as the skeletal system, or matrix of the body’s infrastructure and framework, being stable.

“I think of it like the supports and struts holding up a bridge,” explains Dyer, who also hosts the orthoPac podcast. “With time, these supports can become weak for several reasons and the structure becomes compromised. The same type of process can occur in your bones and skeleton and lead to several problems.”

It’s easy to forget that the skeleton is a metabolic organ responsible for many bodily functions such as storing and processing minerals like calcium and the production of blood cells. Using the bridge analogy again, Dyer explains that if a person develops a deficiency in bone-forming cells or an overproduction of bone absorption, the process becomes unbalanced. If the imbalance is significant, it can result in osteoporosis or loss of the body’s structural framework and skeletal integrity.

Bone Voyage

Lifestyle choices play a critical role in bone health. Diet can either support bone health or have an adverse effect. Dyer

points out that the two most important nutrients for bone health are calcium and vitamin D.

“Calcium storage occurs in bones with its primary function being to provide structural integrity,” he says. “Calcium metabolism is a complex process with multiple variables including the effects of various hormones, vitamin D, and dietary intake.”

Dairy, dark leafy greens, nuts like almonds and mushrooms are good sources of calcium. Eggs and salmon are excellent sources of calcium and vitamin D. Conversely, there are many things that will sabotage skeletal health, including a salty diet, too much alcohol consumption, soft drinks with high levels of phosphates and preservatives, too much caffeine and sugary food intake such as processed grains and cereal. Smoking, according to Dyer, is also horrible for bone health. For a more detailed source of foods rich with calcium or vitamin D, Dyer recommends an online list published by the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation.

Not surprisingly, exercise also plays an important role in developing and maintaining strong bones. Dyer explains that the weight of the body exerts stress on the skeletal system, which in turn, activates bone formation. Weight-bearing exercises vary and include aerobics, hiking, dancing and even walking. A person should choose what’s appropriate for their age and physical condition.

“In general, bone mass or the density of bone peaks in your mid to late twenties, then stabilizes until about age 50,” Dyer says.

Women need to be especially vigilant as they age. Dyer



HEAVY Lifting

Diet and exercise have helped
Cris Oehler reduce her osteoporosis risk

By Michael Gilbert

After Cris Oehler started experiencing brain fog and hot flashes around the time of her 38th birthday, a visit to her primary care physician revealed she had early-onset menopause.

Two years later, a bone-density scan revealed she also had osteopenia, a condition defined by low bone-mineral density and which increases the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Oehler, 66, considers the latter diagnosis to be a blessing. While she did not take corrective action until roughly five years afterward — when a bone scan at age 45 revealed she was “tipping into osteoporosis” — she was young enough to begin effectively preventing its onset.

Oehler, a member of the KLN Family Brands board of directors who once worked as a high school teacher, reached out to Blake Johnson, a former student who was passionate about nutrition and physiology. Oehler and Johnson developed a training regimen that emphasized weight-training, with the goal of increasing her bone mineral density by 1% in nine months.

“The experiment,” as Oehler calls it, also incorporated CrossFit training; a diet rich in vegetables, protein and whole foods; and a reduction in coffee consumption. The result was a 1% gain of bone density in her hips and 5% gain in her spine.

Oehler continues to practice that exercise and dietary program today. She is not losing bone density nor does she take any bone-building medications.

“I know that if you want more freedom and less pain in your old age, you don’t want osteoporosis,” Oehler says. “In the end, the early menopause was a blessing because it got me started with the weightlifting and healthy eating habits by my mid-40s.

“The workouts have done wonders and really helped with keeping the brain sharp.”

She enjoys sharing her success story with younger women with the hope of educating them on the path to better bone health.

“The earlier you start, the better your odds are of being healthy,” she explains. “It’s important to limit your coffee and alcohol consumption and to stay away from soda, while eating your vegetables and getting your protein.

Oehler emphasizes the importance of impact exercises such as walking, running and lifting weights.

“The workouts have to be heavy in order to build up your bones,” she says.

stresses that menopause is a crucial time because there is a precipitous loss of estrogen, which is another hormone that regulates bone metabolism and protects against bone loss.

In addition to weight-bearing exercises, activities like weight training and using therapeutic bands activate bone formation while strengthening supporting muscles, tendons and ligaments. Yoga and tai chi help improve balance and coordination to decrease risk of falls, a source of bone fractures.

Common Misconceptions

A little knowledge about bone health is helpful, but misconceptions can be potentially harmful. Dyer emphasizes that when it comes to vitamins and supplements, more does not equate to better. Too much calcium can lead to kidney stones or hypercalcemia where bones release calcium storage to achieve homeostasis in the body. Vitamins can also interact with other vitamins to produce undesirable effects such as calcium interfering with iron absorption. He also warns that vitamin supplementation cannot take the place of a healthy diet and exercise habits.

“Talk to your medical provider about your own situation, your risk factors and what additional steps you need to take to maintain good bone health,” Dyer says.



Get Your Groove On

Dancing is a full-body workout that can enhance strength, balance and mobility

By Karen Marley

A catchy beat is an irresistible invitation to move, groove and feel good. But there's another reason to get up and shake a leg. Every dancer of every skill level is twirling, hopping, stomping and smiling their way to better health.

"Posture, breathing and rhythm can all impact your brain, therefore increasing energy levels and the ability to focus, while reducing fatigue and depression," explains certified classical and modern ballet teacher Sarah Hardy.

Hardy has worked in multiple countries across age groups and skill levels for more than two decades. She understands the connection between dancing and whole-body health. In addition to teaching a strength training program created for dancers, she is enrolled in a biomechanics corrective exercise specialist course.

The Dancing Way

In dance, posture, stability and mobility allow movement to flow. Not coincidentally, they are also the three aspects of well-being Hardy feels everyone should prioritize in their fitness journey.

"To achieve these three elements, one needs a combination of strength, stabilization and mobility work," she says.

The benefits of improved posture, coordination, stability and mobility go beyond the dance floor. Better balance prevents falls, while increased strength and body awareness can help a person be more effective at everything from carrying groceries to enjoying other fitness activities.

Sweat and Commitment

Dance is a true full-body workout and accomplished dancers dedicate years of intense study to their craft. In ballet, simply standing in a basic "turnout" position of external rotation activates six different muscles, and that's before adding any arm positions or movement. Some might counter that lifting weights also targets muscles, but Hardy points out that a weight-based workout isolates movement and engages a limited range of motion.

"Dance requires the same, actually more, muscles, but with a more diverse movement of range and pattern," Hardy says. "A combination of both training styles is wonderful, in my opinion."

Dancing is for Everyone

For anyone who is considering adding dance to their fitness journey, Hardy has three words of advice.

"Go for it!" she exclaims.

A person can take classes in-person, online, at the gym or even watch tutorials on social media. There are classes tailored to all levels across many styles of dance — hip hop, ballet, salsa, jazz, and more. Then there are fusion classes like Zumba and Jazzercise that combine conventional exercise with dance moves.

"Find a teacher you connect with," Hardy advises. "Have fun with it!"



Tuffy's Pet Foods employee Mariana Diaz has been dancing since she was 8 years old.

LIFELONG LOVE

Mariana Diaz shares her passion for dance by teaching

By Erin Yarnall

For Mariana Diaz, dancing has endless benefits.

“You get a lot of stamina, you’re sweating a lot, you’re getting your exercise and you’re burning quite a bit of calories from dancing,” says Diaz, a dance and fitness instructor at the Perham Area Community Center.

Those benefits, as well as a lifelong love of dancing, led Diaz to take numerous classes throughout her life, and ultimately become an instructor. She started dancing around age 8, when her parents enrolled her in a ballet class.

“Growing up, my parents have always been into dancing,” Diaz says. “It’s been part of the home, and dancing is what we enjoy. Whenever we go to parties, my parents are always the ones who are first on the dance floor and last to get off.”

The instructor is well-versed in a variety of dance genres. In addition to that first ballet class, Diaz took jazz classes in Perham, as well as dance courses in college, and belly dance, Latin dance and hip hop during her study abroad program in Mexico.

In addition to her role as a dance instructor at the PACC, where she teaches a dance fit fusion class, Diaz also works as a sales order specialist at Tuffy’s Pet Foods.

Diaz says dance not only provides health benefits, but attendees can also enjoy learning something new or developing a skill with a friend or significant other.

Her classes at the PACC are a combination of dancing and fitness-focused classes.

While the fitness benefits are great for Diaz and her students, she continues to teach because of her love for dancing.

“I just enjoy dancing,” Diaz says. “As long as there’s music, I’ll dance to it.”

Give Dry a Try

Many popular cocktails can be made without alcohol

By Michael Gilbert

A little more than a decade ago, a British charity called “Alcohol Change UK” began encouraging people to stop drinking alcohol to kick off the new year.

“Dry January” started in 2013 with 4,000 people in the United Kingdom participating. The initiative has grown in popularity ever since, and nearly 9 million total in the UK, France, Switzerland, Norway, Germany and the United States took part in the campaign in 2023.



“The idea is after holiday indulgences and when everyone is making their New Year’s resolutions, to include a goal to abstain from alcohol for the month of January,” says Boris Cicak, a doctor with Neurogan, a California-based vitamin and supplements store. “Since its inception, Dry January has spawned an entire sober-curious movement.”

A “sober-curious movement” is a movement many should get behind since the long-term effects of alcohol are “innumerable,” according to Cicak.

“The damage to your body that long-term alcohol abuse does goes far beyond the most commonly associated liver damage,” Cicak says. “It can also cause everything from high blood pressure to heart disease and neurologic disorders.”

Pharmacist Sazan Sylejmani says alcohol can not only cause health issues, but mental problems as well.

“Alcohol abuse can impact mental health and cause depression and anxiety,” says Sylejmani, the owner of Westmont Pharmacy in Illinois. “In my practice, I’ve seen patients improve both physically and mentally after reducing alcohol intake, which reinforces the importance of initiatives like Dry January. Encouraging such changes can lead to not just improved health outcomes but also improved quality of life.”

Ramit Singh Sambyal, a doctor with ClinicSpots, a digital health care and appointment booking platform, encourages his patients to try Dry January as a way to “reset” and improve their health.

“Dry January is a great way to step back and see how cutting out alcohol affects your body and mind,” he says. “I’ve had patients tell me they sleep better, feel more focused and even notice healthier skin after just a few weeks.

“One thing that doesn’t get talked about enough is how alcohol damages gut health. It can inflame the gut lining, affect digestion and even disrupt your mood since so much of our mental health is tied to gut health.”

For those on the fence about trying Dry January, Cicak believes if they “go for it,” they won’t regret it.

“It’s actually pretty fun coming up with unique, new and interesting combinations for mocktails or putting a ‘dry’ twist on a classic,” he says. “I don’t even miss alcohol because any of your favorite cocktails can be made sans liquor.”

Citrus Ginger Spritz

Ingredients:

4 oz sparkling water or club soda
 1 oz freshly squeezed orange juice
 1 oz freshly squeezed lime juice
 1 tsp honey or agave syrup (optional)
 A small piece of fresh ginger, finely grated
 Ice cubes
 Orange or lime slice for garnish

Instructions:

- In a shaker or mixing glass, combine the orange juice, lime juice, honey (if using), and grated ginger. Stir well.
- Fill glass with ice cubes and pour the juice mixture over the ice.
- Top with sparkling water or club soda and give it a gentle stir.
- Garnish with a slice of orange or lime for a refreshing finish.



Matcha Fizz Mocktail

Ingredients:

1 tsp matcha powder
 1/2 cup cold sparkling water
 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
 A drizzle of honey

Instructions:

- Add all ingredients together, shake it up with ice and garnish with mint.

Budgeting Basics



Start by tracking income and expenses and consider your savings options

By Community Health Staff

The new year is a perfect time to reassess finances and put new practices in place. One of these should be creating and sticking to a budget.

Budgeting is necessary for many reasons, including managing monthly expenses and keeping up with bills, as well as building long-term wealth and saving for retirement.

Unfortunately, many do not know how or simply do not budget their finances consistently. Here are some tips on getting started or getting back on track.

Figure out your monthly income

Your net income — the money you receive after taxes and other deductions — can be found on your pay stub or bank statement if you use direct deposit.

Estimate your monthly expenses

A spreadsheet can help with this, and many options can be found online. Add your most important expenses first, like mortgage/rent, utilities, vehicle, credit cards and groceries. Next, add other expenses.

Using a spreadsheet to list expenses can help visualize where your money is going and make issues easier to identify and anticipate. There are also apps available to track finances.

Pick a budget plan

One popular method is the 50/30/20 rule. Using this method, 50% of your monthly income is directed toward things you

need, like housing, utilities and groceries. Next, 30% is spent on things you enjoy, like restaurants, entertainment and travel. The remaining 20% is directed to savings and investments, and that money should be transferred automatically each month to ensure it is used for that purpose.

Anticipate emergencies

Saving for emergencies — like a car repair, appliance repair or job loss — can help avoid relying on credit cards. Experts recommend saving three to six months of expenses for this safety net, but the amount may differ depending on individual circumstances.

Look ahead

While experts recommend saving at least 10% of income each month for retirement, that isn't possible for everyone. But through compound interest, saving even a small amount each paycheck can grow your money.

For example, consider a savings account or mutual fund that earns 5% interest and starts with a \$100 deposit. If just \$15 is contributed to the fund every month over 20 years, the owner will contribute \$3,700, but the fund will be worth more than \$6,200.

There are a variety of long-term savings options available that can be considered with a financial advisor, including 401(k) and IRA accounts. A health savings account or HSA may also be an option through your employee benefit plan.

Get Financially Fit

Spend wisely and make your money work for you

By Michael Gilbert

The key to financial wellness? Well, that may be easier than you might think.

“Live within your means,” says Ben Bathke, a financial planner who assists KLN employees. “One of the problems people have with their financial situation is that their rent and car payments are too high in relation to their income. You are going to have a hard time funding the rest of your life if that’s the case.”

Fellow financial planner Casey Nelson, who also works with KLN team members, says individuals spend as much as 50% of their income on mortgage or rent in some cases. That can present a problem because Nelson and Bathke suggest allocating a total of 55% of income to “fixed costs,” which also include utilities, taxes, transportation and groceries in addition to housing.

“We encourage people to spend no more than 25 to 30% of their take-home pay on mortgage or rent,” Nelson says. “The big thing is to keep fixed costs low because then you will have money to do the things that you want to do. If you’re able to commit to these strategies at a young age, all the better, because then you have the ability to do the investment savings for a longer period of time.”

Saving and Investing

In an ideal situation, Nelson and Bathke suggest starting a savings plan with your very first paycheck, even at age 16.

“I’ll certainly be telling my kids to do that when they get their first job,” Nelson says. “It’s a great way to devote yourself to living on less than your full check.”

Of course, not everyone has been saving since their first check. For those in that situation, the duo recommends trying to invest 10% of each paycheck in a 401(k), Roth IRA or investment account.

“That commitment to putting a few dollars aside will help you sleep better at night and have some wealth building,” Nelson says. “A 401(k) with an employer match is a great way to go because that is free money for the individual. The beautiful part about a 401(k) is people tend to forget about it after they do it because it is automatically taken out of your paycheck.”

Emergency Fund

Nelson and Bathke are also proponents of having an “emergency fund.” Each pay period, the duo suggests putting 10% into this fund, which is used to cover unexpected or sudden expenses.

“Having an emergency fund is one of the first things I talk to people about when they are planning to enroll in our 401(k) plan,” says Bathke. “I want to make sure they have money in the bank right now for an emergency because if they don’t, they are going to be coming right back to their 401(k) and taking money out.”

Nelson says a good rule of thumb is to have a minimum of three months of expenses in an emergency fund.

“If it costs you \$2,000 a month to live and you have \$6,000 in the bank, at least you can eat for three months,” he says. “Obviously, six to 12 months would be the ideal amount for an emergency fund, but that can sometimes be very difficult to obtain.”

Nelson and Bathke are committed to helping KLN employees achieve financial wellness and visit the offices in Perham and Delano frequently.

“We are available whenever people want to talk with us,” Nelson says.

Dream Manager

Nelson and Bathke encourages all KLN employees to take advantage of “The Dream Manager,” a life-coaching program that provides employees support to pursue their personal dreams. Employees can contact HR for more information.

“The Dream Manager is a program that covers your entire life from career to health to personal life,” Bathke says. “It’s a way to set goals and achieve them.”



Ben Bathke



Casey Nelson

Don't
Forget
Fiber



Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are essential for gut health and more

By Erin Yarnall

One of the best ways to maintain your health is by following a well-balanced diet, and a crucial part of that balance is fiber.

Fiber is an indigestible carbohydrate found naturally in many plants and grains and is best known for aiding the digestive process. But fiber has additional benefits beyond keeping you regular.

“It can aid in digestion, help maintain a healthy weight and lower the risk of heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer,” says Trista Best, a registered dietitian at Balance One Supplements. “Fiber also helps regulate blood sugar levels and can improve cholesterol levels. It also helps keep you feeling full, reducing the chances of overeating and weight gain.”

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a healthy intake of fiber is 14 grams for every 1,000 calories eaten. A 2,000 calorie-diet should therefore include 28 grams of fiber every day.

“To hit your recommended amount of daily fiber, prioritize fruits and vegetables at every meal and try to choose whole grain options when you can,” says Christine Byrne, a registered dietitian and the owner of Ruby Oak Nutrition.

Byrne says she doesn't give strict meal plans, but if someone wanted to follow a diet that hits the daily recommended intake for fiber, there are a few meals that can help.

- Breakfast: Rolled oats with berries and peanut butter.
- Lunch: A big salad with leafy greens, cherry tomatoes and avocado for fiber content, as well as cheese and salmon for protein.
- Dinner: Cooked farro with carrots and parsnips, served with steak.

You don't just have to focus on incorporating high amounts of fiber into your meals, either. There are plenty of quick snacks that can have a high fiber content, like fresh fruit and vegetables.

“Fruits and vegetables make great fiber-rich snacks, especially when paired with other fiber-rich foods like hummus, nuts or nut butters,” Byrne says.

While it's important to hit the daily recommended intake for fiber, it is possible to have too much fiber in your diet. If that happens, it can result in stomach discomfort and potential digestive issues, according to Best.

“Some signs and symptoms of ingesting too much fiber include bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhea and abdominal cramping,” Best says.

“Additionally, consuming large amounts of insoluble fiber without drinking enough water can cause fecal impaction and intestinal blockages.”

Consuming too much fiber is an issue that can potentially be resolved by drinking water, but if pain and symptoms persist, Best recommends consulting with a doctor or nurse.

“If you think you have eaten too much fiber and are experiencing discomfort or digestive issues, it is important to stay hydrated and gradually reduce your fiber intake,” Best says. “Drinking plenty of water can help soften stool and prevent constipation. If symptoms persist or worsen, it is important to consult a health care professional.”

SIMPLE FLAVORS

Stay warm with hearty and healthy dishes



Slow-Cooker Vegetable Minestrone Soup

Ingredients

4 large carrots, peeled and chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
1 small red onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
2 (15 oz) cans no-sodium-added red kidney beans, rinsed
2 (15 oz) cans no-sodium-added diced tomatoes, undrained
6 cups no-sodium-added vegetable broth
2 Tbsp Italian seasoning
1 tsp crushed red pepper
3/4 tsp salt, divided
1/2 tsp ground pepper
1 large zucchini, chopped
4 oz whole-wheat pasta elbows or other small pasta (about 1 cup)
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

Combine carrots, celery, onion, garlic, green beans, kidney beans, tomatoes, broth, Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper, 1/4 tsp salt, and pepper in a 6 or 8-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Stir in zucchini, pasta and the remaining 1/2 tsp salt. Cover and cook on low until the pasta is tender, 15 to 20 minutes more. Serve immediately, topping each serving with about 1 1/2 Tbsp Parmesan.

Healthy Turkey Meatballs

Ingredients

1 lb lean ground turkey
1 large egg, beaten
1/4 cup dried bread crumbs
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
1 tsp dried parsley
1 tsp dried basil
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp onion powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper

Optional Sauce

1 cup ketchup
4 Tbsp brown sugar
1 1/2 tsp dried mustard

Directions

Prepare a large baking sheet with parchment paper or foil and lightly grease it with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Use a tablespoon to scoop meatballs and place them on the baking sheet.

Broil for 7-9 minutes. Leave in the oven and bake 4-5 more minutes at 350 degrees to finish cooking through or add to marinara sauce to simmer for 15 minutes.

If using optional sauce, combine the sauce ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a light simmer. Add sauce to meatballs to serve or use the sauce as a dip for meatballs.





Roasted Squash with Garlic and Parsley

Ingredients

5 lbs winter squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper, divided
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp chopped Italian parsley

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Toss squash with 4 tsp oil, salt and 1/4 tsp pepper. Spread evenly on a large baking sheet. Roast, stirring occasionally, until tender throughout and lightly browned, 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the variety of squash.

Heat the remaining 2 tsp of oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant but not brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Toss the roasted squash with the garlic and parsley. Taste, adjust seasoning and serve.

Walnut Apple Crisp

Ingredients

Nonstick cooking spray
3 Tbsp granulated sugar
2 tsp lemon juice
1 1/2 tsp cornstarch
1/4 tsp ground ginger
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
6 large tart cooking apples, peeled (if desired) and cut into 1/2-inch wedges (10 cups)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
Dash salt
1/4 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
Vanilla ice cream (optional)

Directions

Coat a 2- to 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray; set aside.

In an extra-large bowl combine 3 tablespoons granulated sugar, lemon juice, cornstarch, ginger, and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Gently stir in apples. Transfer apple mixture to the prepared cooker.

For topping, in a small bowl stir together flour, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, brown sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in walnuts. Sprinkle topping over apple mixture.

Cover and cook on low-heat setting about 4 hours or on high-heat setting about 2 hours or until apples are tender. If desired, serve with ice cream.



New Year, New Habits

Start small, expect setbacks
and focus on making progress

By Michael Gilbert

Resolutions are as much a part of the New Year as the ball drop and midnight toasts. But while the clean slate the New Year brings has people eager to take them on, that excitement doesn't last long. The average resolution sticks for fewer than four months, according to a 2023 Forbes/One Poll survey.

Instead of resolutions that are lofty or difficult to achieve, health and wellness professionals recommend establishing habits that can become part of a healthy lifestyle.

Diet, exercise and sleep

An important key to a healthier lifestyle is to eat better, says registered dietician and nutritionist Akanksha Kulkarni.

"To cultivate healthy eating practices, consider avoiding refined sugar, excess protein and unhealthy fats," Kulkarni says. "It is important to focus on a diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meat."

Kulkarni admits these changes may not happen overnight, but tells her clients that with perseverance, kindness to oneself and patience, they can be achieved.

"Habits can take about two to three months to stick permanently," she says. "For this to be long-term, it is best to start small and gradually increase the level of difficulty. These habits will eventually evolve into an automatic process for the individual's day-to-day life."

Alison Campbell, the founder of Truve, a training facility and wellness center based in Oakland, Calif., says consistent exercise and adequate sleep are two healthy habits all individuals should strive to achieve.

"I encourage people to aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week," Campbell says. "It's important to mix cardio, strength, mobility and balance

training for best results."

As for sleep, Cambell says try to have around seven-to-nine hours for "immunity, mental clarity and emotional resilience."

Setting manageable goals and establishing a routine like leaving workout gear visible can make it easier for an individual to stay consistent with their exercise, she says.

"Starting small and gradually increasing effort can help embed the habit," according to Campbell. "A habit will become part of a lifestyle once it's no longer forced and feels integrated into your identity and routine."

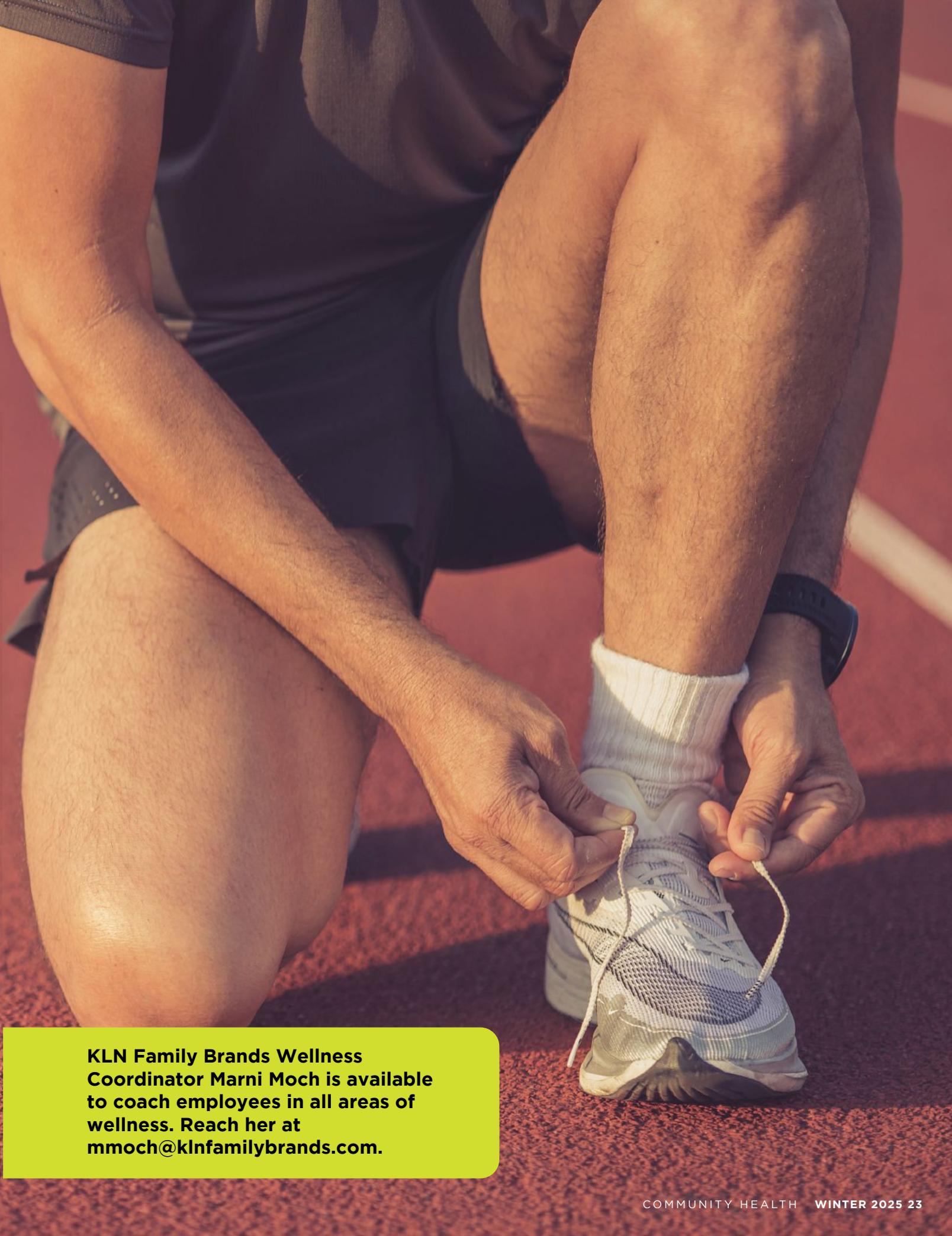
Don't forget mental health

Elvis Rosales, a licensed clinical social worker and the clinical director of the Sonoma, Calif.-based Align Recovery Centers, echoed Cambell's recommendation on sleep and added it's important to limit the amount of time on mobile devices for better overall health.

"Quality sleep is another often overlooked essential, but this is the time when the body repairs and the mind consolidates memories," he says. "That's why it's important to add screen-free periods especially before bed to avoid the impact of blue light on sleep quality. Limiting screen time and taking breaks from our devices can significantly benefit mental health and productivity as well."

Dr. Rostislav Ignatov, the chief medical officer at The Haven Detox in West Palm Beach, Fla., says "unprecedented levels of stress and pressure to constantly stay productive" leads individuals to form bad habits. Now more than ever is the time for people to prioritize regular physical activity, a proper diet and mental self-care, he says.

continued on page 24



KLN Family Brands Wellness Coordinator Marni Moch is available to coach employees in all areas of wellness. Reach her at mmoch@klfamilybrands.com.



continued from page 22

“Prioritizing these things allows us to approach life with more resilience and a sense of balance,” Ignatov says. “Healthy habits go beyond the physical; they encompass mental and emotional wellness, too.”

Ignatov encourages people to create daily routines such as mindful breathing and expressing gratitude to help in establishing healthy habits.

“Establishing a routine can set a positive tone for the day and ground us amid all the chaos,” he says. “When we treat these practices as essential rather than optional, they begin to shift from being ‘good intentions’ to integral parts of a healthy lifestyle.”

Breaking bad

Rosales says people should anticipate some difficulties when trying to break bad habits, but these obstacles will subside over time.

“Our brains are wired for patterns and familiarity, so breaking old habits can be tough,” he says. “Many of these habits, such as junk food cravings or staying up late, are rooted in comfort or instant gratification, which our brain rewards. Starting new habits often feels uncomfortable at first because we’re rewiring these old patterns and challenging what’s familiar. However, once we start experiencing the rewards like feeling more energetic or less stressed, it becomes easier to stay committed.”

Ignatov points out that to break a bad habit, the individual must address the root cause behind it.

“Many bad habits, like overeating, excessive screen time or neglecting sleep, are coping mechanisms that provide temporary comfort or escape,” he says. “For instance, if someone turns to social media to relieve stress, replacing that habit with a

quick outdoor walk or a few minutes of deep breathing can offer similar relief without the negative impact on mental health.”

Dr. Michael Wetter, a clinical psychologist based in Los Angeles, encourages his patients to approach a setback with self-compassion instead of judgement.

“Reflect on what contributed to the setback and develop strategies to address those triggers in the future,” he says. “Maintaining a growth mindset, where you view setbacks as learning opportunities, can prevent discouragement from derailing progress.”

He adds that seeking support through friends, family or a coach can provide encouragement and accountability.

Life coach and former United States Olympian Erin Aldrich-Shean also stresses “grace and resilience” are essential.

“I teach my clients to anticipate setbacks as part of the process, not as failures,” says Aldrich-Shean, who participated in the high jump at the 2000 Olympic Games. “When we slip, it’s crucial to treat ourselves with kindness and refocus on the next positive action. Remember: progress over perfection.”

Wellness pillars

Campbell recommends referring to the pillars of wellness if achieving healthy lifestyle changes becomes difficult. These include exercise, quality sleep and balanced nutrition.

Rosales says he would include mental well-being practices on the list of pillars as these activities can help a person stay engaged and motivated with their other wellness goals.

“The pillars of wellness are foundational because they are interdependent,” he says. “Exercise boosts mental health, good nutrition fuels both mind and body, and mental health practices help you stay motivated.”



Mind. Body. You.

Make the connection with Calm Health.



The Calm Health app provides programs and tools to help support your mental health and well-being – all at your own pace. As a UnitedHealthcare member, Calm Health is included in your health plan and available at no additional cost.

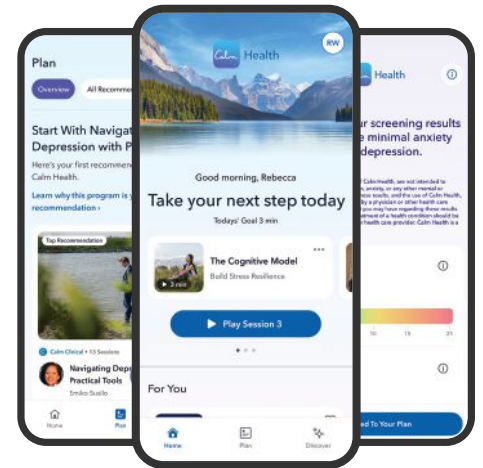
Resources to help support your mental health

To help tailor your Calm Health experience, you'll begin with a short mental health screening. Then, Calm Health will suggest certain programs for you to consider based on where you are in your well-being journey.

Tap into tools and support

The Calm Health app brings you a library of support – including mindfulness content and programs created by psychologists – for a variety of health experiences and life stages. This information is designed to help you:

- **Learn techniques to improve well-being** – Find tools, music and sounds to help you meditate, improve focus, move mindfully and feel calm
- **Work toward goals** – Join self-guided self-care programs, and track your progress along the way
- **Support your mind and body** – Access mental health information and support to help you strengthen the mind-body connection



Scan this code to get started

You'll first need to sign in to your account on myuhc.com® or the UnitedHealthcare® app. If you don't have an account, select Register to create one.



WELLNESS PLAN

Save up to **\$150 off** your health insurance every month

To participate you need to complete:

- Biomarker Screening**
- 3 Wellness Programs**

Have Questions?

Contact **Marni Moch**, KLN Wellness Coordinator
218-347-0525 • mmoch@klnfamilybrands.com

*Wellness is not a destination,
it's a way of life*