

senior review

FREE

October 2025

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A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Rock County

Mercyhealth at Home Earns National Honors

Choosing the right home health or hospice agency can feel overwhelming. Families want to know their loved ones are in caring, capable hands. One way to find peace of mind is to look at how organizations are recognized nationwide for quality care.

This year, Mercyhealth at Home received top national honors from Strategic Healthcare Programs, an independent organization that measures patient and family experiences across the country.

- Mercyhealth Hospice in Illinois earned SHP's highest recognition — Premier Performer — placing in the top 5% nationwide for caregiver and family experience
- Mercyhealth's Home Health program in Wisconsin was named a Superior Performer, ranking in the top 20% nationwide for patient experience.

"These awards reflect the incredible dedication of our hospice and home health teams," said Brandon Cooley, Director of Mercyhealth



at Home. "Our staff works closely with patients and families from the very beginning to build trust, answer questions, and provide the highest quality care in the home. To be recognized at this level is a tremendous honor."

Since 1996, Strategic Healthcare Programs has partnered with more than 7,000 health care organizations to improve patient experience. Strategic Healthcare Programs President Kevin Vogel notes, "These organizations care deeply about the patient experience and they never stop striving to improve every single year."









Mercyhealth Hospice also recently received a five-star rating in family caregiver surveys rating through Medicare's Care Compare, another sign of the team's commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care.

If you or a loved one are considering home health or hospice services, Mercyhealth at Home is here to help. To learn more, call (608) 754-2201 or visit mercyhealthsystem.org

October is breast cancer awareness month



TIPS FOR BREAST CANCER PREVENTION:

<p>Avoid becoming overweight. Avoid gaining weight over time, and try to maintain a body-mass index under 25.</p> 	<p>Eat healthy to avoid tipping the scale. Embrace a diet high in vegetables & fruit and low in sugared drinks, refined carbohydrates & fatty foods.</p> 	<p>Keep physically active. Increased physical activity, even when begun later in life, reduces overall breast-cancer risk.</p> 	<p>Drink little or no alcohol. Women should limit intake to no more than one drink per day, regardless of the type of alcohol.</p> 
<p>Avoid hormone replacement therapy. Menopausal hormone therapy increases risk for breast cancer.</p> 	<p>Don't smoke. Long-term smoking is associated with increased risk of breast cancer in some women.</p> 	<p>Breast-feed your babies for as long as possible. Women who breast-feed their babies for at least a year in total have a reduced risk of developing breast cancer later.</p> 	<p>Get annual mammograms. Regular mammograms are recommended for women aged 40 and older to detect breast cancer early.</p> 



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To learn more, call (608) 754-2201 or visit mercyhealthsystem.org/hospice.



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Live, Laugh, Love with Linda: A Breast Cancer Story

By Kristi Gay, freelance writer

In honor of October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, this is a story about my aunt Linda Olson, the most vivacious, hilarious, creative, generous, and crazy (in all the best ways) woman who was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 49, and lived, laughed, and loved with cancer for the next 15 years, passing in October 2013, one day after a joyful day with her grandsons riding motorized Jeeps, squealing and laughing, in the backyard. This is a story of how your attitude, not life's challenges, is what creates your happiness.

Linda Olsen grew up in Cornell, WI, and married her high school sweetheart, Dean, before having two kids that grew up in the Altoona School District: Kelly and Jade. She taught elementary school in Altoona for 30 years, with many of her schoolkids still calling her "My Favorite Teacher Ever" as they filed into her funeral. Some of my earliest memories of Linda were us decorating her bulletin boards at the end of summer, or organizing her classroom, of which my favorite part was the "Brain Food" bucket of candy that she made available before a particularly difficult test or assignment for the ten-year olds.

Throughout her entire time of living with cancer, she lived, laughed, and loved harder than anyone could without a diagnosis, never knowing how long she'd see her kids and grandkids grow up. She was the bald-headed mascot (usually covered with glitter) to her granddaughter's D1 college basketball team in Illinois, with the entire team lining up for hugs after games. I'll never forget the time when we were at a Minneapolis holiday parade getting a drink at a bar. She had glitter on her bald head and was wearing reindeer antlers, and the male bartender jokingly saying something like "aren't you going to give me a TIP", and she reached into her empty bra after her mastectomy, pulled out the little beanbag they had given her to fill her bra on one side, and said "YOU WANT A TIT??" before roaring with laughter.

Her ease at spreading love was something to write books about. I remember once she met someone in a public bathroom, started talking, and an hour later they were crying together, hugging, and had created an instant connection and support through difficult times, with a complete stranger that most people wouldn't even acknowledge in passing. When my own daughters were probably 4 and 6, prime princess age, she would send "care packages" in the mail, to her GRAND-NIECES, filled to the brim with crowns, princess dresses and skirts, little purses, kid makeup, for no reason at all other than to make their day. She led her two sisters and herself, a trio who named themselves "The Dunks", and who would show up to all sporting events in full costume, to be the loudest cheering section for either the athlete or coach, whoever it was she was there to support. She didn't have the ability to be embarrassed. And she never complained about her cancer diagnosis or all the setbacks that came with 15 years of living through chemo, radiation, hair loss, weight loss, and surgeries. She would always just look ahead to "whatever is next"

from a research or treatment option, sometimes would disappear to lie down briefly, but with her bright blue eyes and huge smile would return shortly to not only take part in the fun, but CREATE IT.

For a couple years after she passed, many of us (her daughter, granddaughter, teacher besties, nieces) did the Susan G Komen Breast Cancer 3Day walk, raising over \$30,000 toward breast cancer research, walking 60 miles over the course of three days, and of course living in her honor with full matching breast-related costumes each day. If there was ever a person who got the most out of life, who lived life to the fullest every single day, who brought the energy and fun to whichever room she entered, and who fully embodied the "Live, Laugh, Love" saying on signs at Hobby Lobby, it was Linda Olson.

So the takeaways of this story are: breast cancer can be awful, so do your self-checks monthly, get your mammograms and follow-ups, and if God forbid you are ever diagnosed with breast cancer, live, laugh, and love like Linda, through whatever challenges life gives you, never letting the smile or energy leave until the very last hour.



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Library Foundation Launches 100 Extraordinary Women™ Campaign to Support Discovery PLAYce

Beloit Public Library and its Foundation are proud to announce the official launch of the 100 Extraordinary Women™ campaign to support Discovery PLAYce, a bold new early learning initiative at the library.

Discovery PLAYce, opening in Fall 2026, will transform 6,000 square feet of the library into an interactive early childhood learning lab. The space will feature research-based, hands-on Learning Play Stations for children ages 0–6 and their caregivers, all designed to build early literacy, school readiness, and caregiver confidence through purposeful play. With 88% of Beloit’s third graders reading below grade level, Discovery PLAYce aims to change the story—starting at birth.

The 100 Extraordinary Women™ campaign invites 100 women—or groups of women—to each give or pledge \$1,000 (payable over 5 years) in support of this transformative project. Supporters can choose to make a one-time gift of \$1,000, pledge \$200 per year for five years, or contribute approximately \$18 per month (the cost of just a few cups of coffee) over five years—whatever works best for their budget.

Donations will fund:

- Interactive, culturally responsive Learning Play Stations
- Five years of staff-led programming and outreach
- Community pop-up play kits
- Ongoing evaluation to ensure measurable impact

Women may donate in their own name, or in honor or memory of another extraordinary woman. Men are also welcome to donate in honor or memory of a woman who is meaningful to them. Groups like book clubs, co-workers, or families may pool resources to make a collective gift.

“Discovery PLAYce is going to be an extraordinary asset for all children in our community to get access to fun learning opportunities that will help them reach their full potential,” said Lori Packard Dabson, 100EW Co-Chair and retired kindergarten teacher and child development teacher. “Through this campaign, we’re giving every woman the opportunity to make a bold investment in Beloit’s future.”

The campaign is led by a passionate committee of local women who are working together to build momentum and engage the community. Committee members include Lori Packard Dabson (Co-Chair), Mary Kaminski (Co-Chair), Florence Haley, Regina Hendrix, Michelle Hendrix-Nora, Lisa Ingalls, Jennifer Knodl, Amy Lokrantz, Amy Mitchell, Dawn Stadelman, and Jodi Sweeney.

The names of all extraordinary women will be permanently honored with naming rights to the Baby/Toddler Learning Play Station inside Discovery PLAYce.



The campaign will culminate in a complimentary celebratory event on Monday, December 8 at The Beloit Club—an uplifting gathering to honor the extraordinary strength, generosity, and impact of women, and to celebrate raising \$100,000 together in support of Beloit’s children. Anyone who has made a gift or pledge through the 100EW challenge will be invited.

Campaign progress updates will be shared on the library’s Facebook page and on the campaign thermometer at 100extraordinarywomen.com.

To make a gift to the 100 Extraordinary Women campaign for Discovery PLAYce, visit <https://100extraordinarywomen.com/donate-to-causes>. Select “Discovery PLAYce at Beloit Public Library” from the list of causes, then choose your giving option. Or visit the Beloit Public Library booth on Saturday, September 6 at the Beloit Farmers Market.

For more information on Discovery PLAYce and ways to support the project, visit www.beloitlibrary.org.

About 100 Extraordinary Women™: 100EW is a national initiative that connects extraordinary women to extraordinary causes. When 100 women come together to each give \$1,000, they raise \$100,000 or more for transformational projects that uplift their communities. Learn more at 100extraordinarywomen.com.

About Discovery PLAYce: Discovery PLAYce is a signature project of Beloit Public Library and its Foundation, designed to promote early brain development and school readiness in Beloit’s youngest learners. With bilingual signage, storybook pairings, and a focus on fun and caregiver empowerment, the space will serve thousands of families for years to come.

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Assistance Available for Pension and Retirement Plan Issues

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

Pension income can improve lives and increase overall independence well beyond retirement age. However, many people find pension plans and laws difficult to navigate without assistance. Pension Counseling Projects can help people understand their pension rights and claim the benefits they've earned. These projects are run by local nonprofit organizations and funded under the Older Americans Act through a grant program of the Administration on Community Living.

The Upper Midwest Pension Rights Project, a project of Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights, provides free assistance to individuals with retirement-related questions or problems. The program is based in Minnesota, but its service area includes Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

In addition to answering legal questions about your pension, defined contribution plans (such as 401(k)s and 403(b)s), profit-sharing plans, and cash balance and other hybrid pension plans, Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights can also help workers, retirees, and their families in the following areas:

- Filing claims and appeals to obtain retirement benefits,
- Obtaining and explaining retirement plan documents,
- Correcting benefit miscalculations,
- Assisting with recoupment actions,
- Assisting with suspension of pension benefits issues,
- Obtaining spousal and other survivor benefits, and
- Locating retirement benefits from former employers.



If you have lived or worked in Wisconsin at one time in your life and you have questions about your pension, please reach out to Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights. This project provides free assistance regardless of your age, income, or value of the pension involved.

Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights can be reached directly by phone at 866-783-5021 or you can request assistance online at: <https://trellisconnects.org/request-assistance-retirement-rights/>.

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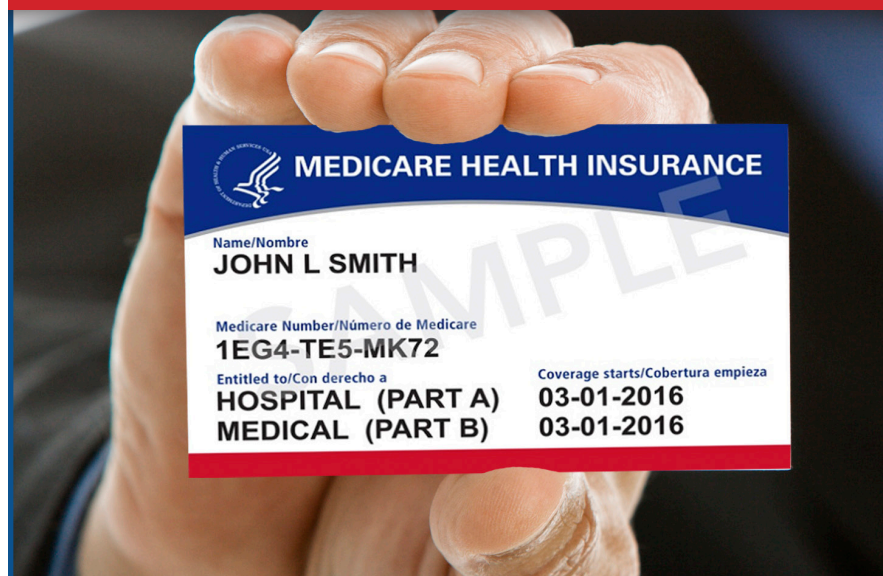



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 **WisconsinSeniorMedicarePatrol**

Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 25, 2025

By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

What do you do when you no longer need medication, or it expires before it's used up? Improper disposal of medication, or not disposing of it at all can be harmful for your loved ones and for the environment. Fortunately, it's easy to participate in Drug Take Back Day. All you need to do is drop your unused medications in a bin at a collection site.

You can find a map of collection sites here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/drug-take-back-day.htm>.



The following items will be accepted at collection sites, including:

- Capsules, Creams, Inhalers, Non-aerosol sprays, Ointments, Patches, Pills, Vials

Pet medications will also be accepted. Please note that liquids must be in their original container. In addition, vape pens will be accepted if the batteries have been removed. Similarly, other e-cigarette devices will be accepted if the batteries are removed.

The following items will not be accepted:

- Aerosol cans
- Anything containing blood or a bodily fluid
- Household hazardous waste (paint, pesticides, oil, gas)
- Illegal drugs
- Iodine-containing medications
- Mercury thermometers
- Personal care products (shampoo, soap, lotion, sunscreen, etc.)
- Sharps or syringes
- Vape pens or e-cigarette devices with a built-in battery that cannot be removed.

If you plan to store unused medication for a drug collection event, you can minimize the risk of accidental poisoning, overdose, or illegal use by storing medication out of reach of children or in a locked cabinet. If you have narcotics or other controlled substances, contact your local police department to find out if they will accept them. Some police departments accept non-controlled substances, too. You can also find a permanent drug drop box here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/permanent-drug-drop-boxes.htm>.

Alternatively, some medication may be reused or donated. Wisconsin allows certain pharmacies to take back unit doses of medication for cancer and chronic diseases. This medication will be redistributed through the Wisconsin Drug Repository. For more information about the Wisconsin Drug Repository, please see: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/cancer-drugrepo.htm>. Please note that most charities will not accept unexpired medication from households. If you see an opportunity to donate medication, be very cautious and research the program well.

If you have no other options, do not flush and do not burn your unused medication. Instead, put them in the trash. When there is a risk of accidental poisoning, overdose, or illegal use, it is better to throw out unused medications than to keep them in your home. When you throw out unused medication, you should remove all labels that identify the medication or provide personal information about you, including prescription information that someone could try to refill. In addition, you should consider dissolving the medication in a small amount of water, grinding up pills, or mixing the medication with coffee grounds or kitty litter. You can also put the medication into another container to better hide it in your trash.

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Autumn's Sweetest Gift: The Apple Harvest in Wisconsin

As October paints Wisconsin in gold and crimson, one of the most cherished traditions of the season comes into full swing—the apple harvest. For many of us, the crisp bite of a fresh-picked apple brings back memories of childhood orchard visits, homemade pies cooling on the windowsill, and warm mugs of cider shared with friends.

Wisconsin's Apple Legacy

Did you know that Wisconsin is home to over 300 apple orchards? From the rolling hills of Bayfield to the charming countryside of Door County, our state grows dozens of varieties like Honeycrisp, McIntosh, Cortland, and the ever-popular Jonathan.

October is the peak of harvest season, making it the perfect time to enjoy a trip to a local orchard—or even just savor a fresh apple from the local market.

Simple Ways to Enjoy the Harvest

- **Homemade Apple Sauce** – Easy to make and gentle on the stomach, especially when spiced with cinnamon.
- **Baked Apple Slices** – A naturally sweet treat with a dash of nutmeg and brown sugar.
- **Warm Apple Cider** – Nothing beats a cozy cup while watching the leaves fall outside your window.



Fun Fact: An average apple has about 80 calories and is packed with fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants—delicious and good for you, too!

Local Orchards to Explore

If you're up for an outing, consider visiting a nearby orchard. Many offer senior-friendly tours, cider tastings, and even hayrides. Be sure to dress in layers and bring a hat—the fall sun can be bright, even on cooler days!

A Time to Savor and Reflect

More than just a fruit, apples represent comfort, tradition, and the sweet rewards of the season. Whether you're picking them yourself, baking an old family recipe, or simply enjoying one with lunch, take a moment to appreciate the simple joys of fall.

Happy Harvest Season!

October Recipe: Chunky Apple Cake Recipe

Recipe from tasteofhome.com

Ingredients

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 6 cups chopped peeled tart apples

Butterscotch Sauce

- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream

Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, sugar and vanilla. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and baking soda; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well (batter will be stiff). Stir in apples until well combined.
2. Spread into greased 13-in. x 9-in. baking dish. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until top is lightly browned and springs back when lightly touched. Cool for 30 minutes before serving.
3. **Butterscotch Sauce** – In a small saucepan, combine brown sugar and butter. Cook over medium heat until butter melted. Gradually add cream. Bring to a slow boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat. Serve with cake.



Prep Time: 20 minutes | Bake Time: 40 minutes

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Benefits of Playing Trivia Games for Older Adults

By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

Playing trivia games is a really fun way to connect and spend time with family and friends of any age; however, playing trivia can be especially beneficial for older adults. Trivia games can help improve memory and cognition, reduce stress and anxiety levels, improve problem solving skills, improve mood, help increase overall knowledge, and be an amazing social activity.

There are many ways to play trivia. First, you can watch TV shows such as “Jeopardy,” “The Floor,” or any other number of trivia shows on television and play along. There are also trivia-based board games such as Trivial Pursuit, Bezzerswizzer, Wits and Wagers, and others. Trivial Pursuit, for example, has many different versions including a “Baby Boomer” version and niche versions such as Star Wars or Disney. There are also websites and



apps where you can play trivia games. Finally, you may be able to find in-person trivia games in your area.

In-person trivia games are sometimes hosted at bars, but not always. You may be able to find a trivia night in your town that is hosted at a bowling alley, restaurant, coffee shop, or senior center. In-person trivia games are usually team-based, but many allow people to play solo. Many times, if someone comes to a trivia night solo, they can join another team, which is a great way to make new

friends. Some trivia nights have a limit on how many people can join per team, and some do not. Almost all local trivia nights are free and include prizes for winning teams. To find an in-person, team trivia game in your area, use your favorite internet search engine and type “trivia near me.”

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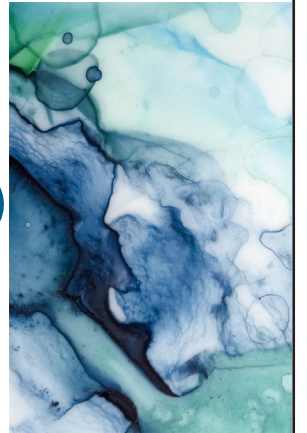
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Embracing the Beauty of Seasonal Changes

By Carl A. Trapani, MA, MS, LPC, Chippewa Manor Campus Chaplain

As summer fades and we head into autumn, we are reminded of the passing of time and the continual change of seasons. With each change, we witness the rhythmic dance of nature—spring's bloom, summer's vigor, autumn's tapestry, and winter's quietude. For those of us in our golden years, each season offers wisdom from memories of days gone by.

Each season carries its own personality, much like us! In spring, for instance, everything wakes up from winter's slumber, reminding us that growth is possible at any age.

One of the advantages of being a seasoned citizen is recognizing that life rarely follows a linear path—much like the unpredictable weather of early spring. One moment it's sunny, and the next, a surprise snowfall.

We've all had our share of unexpected surprises in life, haven't we? When a long-lost friend suddenly reconnects, or we hear of the success of our children or grandchildren we feel a sense of warmth in our hearts. The feeling is just like seeing daffodils conquering the final days of winter by blooming defiantly in patches of snow.

Summer bursts onto the scene with its welcome warmth. It seems there is more laughter in the summertime – probably because we are outside more and can hear it. Do you remember your own childhood joys of summer? Playing tag until the sun dipped beyond the horizon and then catching fireflies and putting them in jars to be kept as night lights? Remember savoring ice cream treats that melted faster than you could devour them? Those memories can still make us smile. Hosting barbecues, sharing stories around the fire, or creating new adventures can help us embrace the essence of summer days. As we gather with loved ones, don't forget the humor found in mischief—like forgetting to add the secret ingredient in grandma's famous potato salad. After all, nothing bonds families quite like a little kitchen mishap!

Then there's autumn. Autumn provides us time for reflection as the leaves turn golden and fall gently to the ground. It symbolizes the beauty of letting go and the wisdom that comes from embracing change. This season encourages us to ponder our battles, victories, and the legacy we wish to leave behind. Remember to share your life's stories with those you love. If the kids call you a “classic,” just respond with humor that a classic is something really special - like a great book, painting or fine wine - you keep getting better with age. By Thanksgiving, try to organize a family gathering where you can share your life lessons over a meal made for memories. It's a beautiful way to blend the history of your life with the warmth of family unity.

Lastly, winter comes with a blizzard's blast or quiet chill that turns our breath into puffs of steam. As a snowy blanket covers the landscape in its cold white embrace, it reminds us of the



need for rest and stillness amidst life's chaos. Winter offers us a time for reflection and gratitude. Winter can bring about a shift in perspective, urging us to lean into faith—whether it's faith in family, friends, or something greater. Embrace the quiet winter moments to reflect on past joys, lost loved ones, and what tomorrow may bring. So, as the seasons change and we transition through life's stages, let's laugh heartily, share our wisdom, and nurture our faith. Build memories with family and friends and embrace the moments—big and small. Remember, life is not

measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.

Here's to celebrating each season for the special beauty that each phase brings! After all, at 50 and beyond, life is just getting started, and we owe it to ourselves to savor every single moment. Every day is a gift.

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. He has more than 50 years of pastoral service and professional counseling experience. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.

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