

BLACK HILLS Woman

M A G A Z I N E

LiveWell

MEDICAL AESTHETICS

a vibrant vision

LORRI ANN
TWO BULLS

meet the

NEW TEAM
OF BHW



FREE | JANUARY/FEBRUARY EDITION | 2026



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contents

ART & DESIGN



6

EDITOR ARTICLE

A New Perspective

8

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Local Edit

10

ARTIST FEATURE

Lorri Ann Two Bulls

BEAUTY



14

BEAUTY

LiveWell Medical Aesthetics

20

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

New Team of BHW

28

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Gaia Integrative Health

CUISINE



32 **CUISINE**
Happi Homemade

38 **FAMILY**
STEAM Saturdays

42 **A FIELD GUIDE TO 2026**
10 Things to Get You
Through the Year

LIFESTYLE

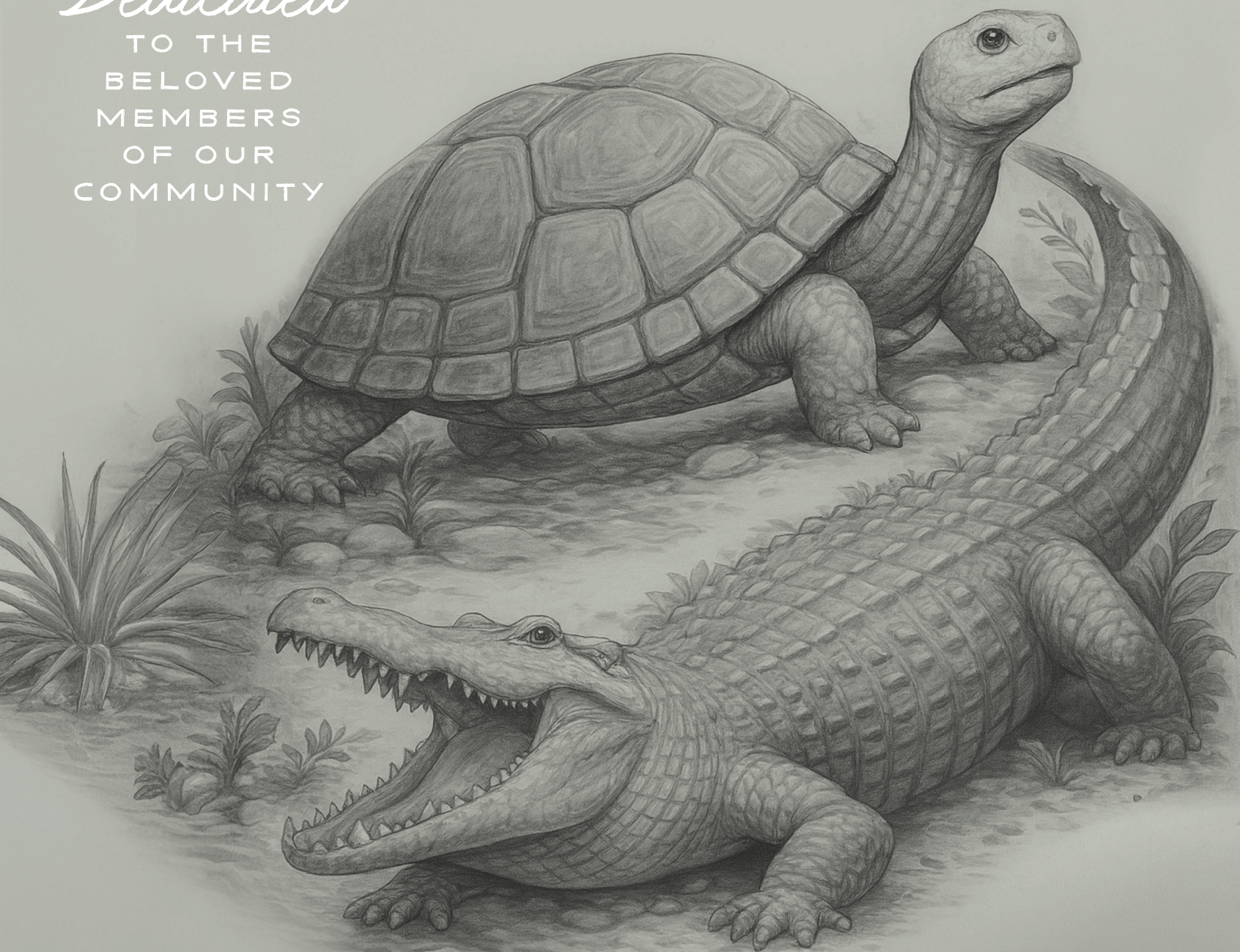


46 **LIFESTYLE**
The Power of
Micro-Self-Care

48 **BHW BOOK CLUB**
What's On Our Shelf

Dedicated

TO THE
BELOVED
MEMBERS
OF OUR
COMMUNITY



*Reptile Gardens and the precious
animals lives that were lost.*



a new PERSPECTIVE

Getting out of town often shifts my perspective in the most important ways. I feel more gratitude for the insignificant moments of each day. I become more aware, more focused, and generally, more positive.

What is unique about perspective is that you do not have to actually change anything... to change everything. Perspective isn't about changing a situation, it's about changing your angle. Perspective shapes our reality more than circumstance ever will.

We can easily shift our perspective by:

Focusing on the positive ("I get to use my talents to serve others." vs. "I have to go to work.")

Respecting someone else's point of view ("I see how my tone impacted my delivery." vs. "That's not what I said!")

Noticing the small things ("I love the quiet mornings." vs. "I wish I could sleep in.")

What makes Black Hills Woman so exceptional is the perspective behind it. It's created by women, written for women, and centered on women worth writing about. It's a collection of stories that inspire us to see our world differently — visit a new local shop, celebrate a woman's success, or try something bold.

And now, I'm thrilled for the newest perspective. When I considered selling Black Hills Woman, I knew it needed to go to the right person. Chantel is that person. Her perspective is positive, forward-thinking, intuitive, and genuinely inspiring. She and her team will continue to tell stories from the lens we love and the lens we need.

Kelsey Parker

THE LOCAL

BY KELS Y PETERSON

JANUARY

Ranging from bopping live music and mouthwatering specialty menus, to the more peculiar lighting of a giant beetle on fire or racing in a homemade outhouse, Black Hills events this January and February will start your year off on a high note. Welcome to 2026!

Restaurant Week

RAPID CITY • JANUARY 15 - 25

Flavor unfolds throughout Rapid City during Restaurant Week! This year will be themed after America's 250th Birthday, making it an even more unique time to dine. Find your favorite and download the app to compete in winning the grand prize.

'26 Deadwood Red Dirt Festival

DEADWOOD • JANUARY 16 & 17

Back-to-back nights of live country music take over the Deadwood Mountain Grand during the Red Dirt Festival. Catch headliner Chancey Williams on Friday night and Braxton Keith on Saturday.

Chinook Days Winter Carnival

SPEARFISH • JANUARY 17

In 1943 the temperature in Spearfish rose from -4 degrees to 45 degrees in just two minutes. Today, the city celebrates the day the thermometer broke with the Chinook Days Winter Carnival. This event is filled with family-friendly games and group rides. Bring your snowshoes, cross-country skies, snow boots, fat bikes, and winter gear!

Burning Beetle

CUSTER • JANUARY 17

A torch-lit trek to set fire to a giant wooden beetle. Intrigued? Many gather in the night for live music and the best bonfire around — all to raise awareness about the destruction caused by the mountain pine beetle in the Black Hills.

Chinook Days BeerFest & Bonfire

SPEARFISH • JANUARY 24

Just like the warm breeze that sweeps through our area - Chinook Days are back with more fun. Attend the ChinookFest BeerFest featuring craft beer, arts, and local food, and end the day with the Chinook Bonfire where you'll find live music, kids activities, and a toasty winter fire.

Medieval Dinner

BOX ELDER • JANUARY 29

Ladies of the court are riding into Box Elder for the first Medieval Dinner. Dress in your finest medieval attire and prepare to be immersed in an evening of grandeur. Guests will feast on a five course meal, enjoy medieval spirits, and be gifted a custom chalice of their own.

Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo

RAPID CITY • JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 7

Saddle up for a full week of wild west action during the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo® in Rapid City. Taking over the Central States Fairgrounds and The Monument, you'll have the opportunity to attend rodeos, concerts, and shop from over 300 vendors.

EDIT

If you'd like to submit an event for our community page, please email us at hello@blackhillswoman.com

FEBRUARY

Mardi Gras

DEADWOOD • FEBRUARY 13 & 14

Dubbed the best celebration north of New Orleans - Deadwood's Mardi Gras includes a parade, masquerade ball, themed cocktails, food, and lots of live music. Friday includes a cocktail crawl and free masquerade ball. Saturday starts with another cocktail crawl, the cajun cookout, and ends with a parade down Main Street.

Winterfest

LEAD • FEBRUARY 20, 21, 22

Outdoor winter fun links up with indoor winter fun at Winterfest - an event for all ages! For three full days you can partake in games, craft creations, outdoor adventures, and indulging in great food and beverages.

Wine, Cheese & Chocolate Stroll

DEADWOOD • FEBRUARY 21

Sip and stroll through historic Deadwood pairing it with the perfect complements — cheese and chocolate. Participating locations throughout town will provide samples of select fine wines, savory cheeses, and delectable chocolates.

Restaurant Week

CUSTER • FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 1

Discover delicious dining all week long in Custer! During this week, participating restaurants will offer their regular menus along with a special Restaurant Week menu for patrons to select from.

MANIA the ABBA Tribute

RAPID CITY • FEBRUARY 26

This blast from the past will have you channeling your inner dancing queen. Catch the Mania ABBA Tribute at The Monument and sing the night away to your favorite ABBA hits.

Black Hills Symphony Orchestra: Bright Horizons

RAPID CITY • FEBRUARY 28

A musical milestone, this powerful ensemble is a concert celebrating 150 years of Rapid City. Fill your night with the beautiful sounds of a symphony and enjoy this special event narrated by Rapid City Mayor, Jason Salamun.

Nemo 500 Outhouse Races

NEMO • FEBRUARY 28

It's almost time for the most unique race of the year in South Dakota - the Nemo Outhouse Races. The main event involves cheering on teams as they race a course in an outhouse-styled vehicle and complete a toilet paper obstacle. Prior to the races, attendees can also enjoy the chili cook-off. Money raised during the Nemo 500 goes to fund the NAJA Shriners Kids Transportation Fund.



LORRI ANN TWO BULLS

— STORY BY KARI NIELSEN

a vibrant

Lorri Ann Two Bulls has been creating art for most of her life.

“I was very aware I could draw at a very young age. I distinctly remember in kindergarten, I was obsessed with drawing flowers,” she says.

A member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and a talented Oglala Lakota artist, Two Bulls draws from the connection to her ancestors on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the cultural

elements of her heritage, and her personal spiritual experience.

“After my cancer diagnoses and the year long treatment process, I made the decision to follow my dream and create work that makes me happy,” she says.

A survivor herself, she was inspired to create doll pins for other cancer survivors. These pins are appropriately titled with the Lakota word “Owicakapte” which means “I came out a battle and I survived.” Each pin is representative and one of a kind.

Two Bulls works with a variety of mediums including canvas, leather, elk horn, clay, and wood panels. But her favorite is the simple choice of paint and pencil.

t vision



"Artists don't decide to be artists. It's just part of the DNA."

"I like to paint people. When I was a teenager I would pencil draw portraits and charge \$20. I love to incorporate shapes and colors and try to make it all make sense. In my opinion, all colors go together," she says.

The vivid imagery of her artwork speaks for itself.

"My childhood years were the 1960s. I was very inspired by the bright colors of fashion. I loved Twiggy, Tiger Morse, Edie Sedgwick, and Carnaby Street fashion. Then I found out about Andy Warhol and my world changed. He inspired me to just go ahead and create, don't pigeon hole my aesthetic," she says.

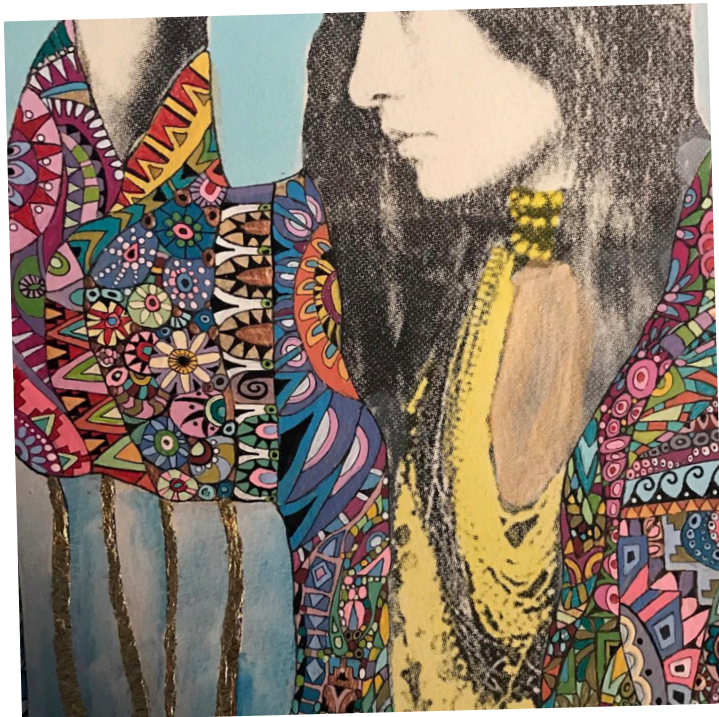
Next to Warhol, Two Bulls also praises both of her parents as artistic influences.

"They were both very good artists," she says.

Being an artist wasn't something she decided to pursue, it was already a piece of her.

"Artists don't decide to be artists. It's just part of the DNA."

Looking at Two Bulls art, it is evident the



fabric of her being is delicately woven through every piece she creates.

“Always look at the eyes [in my pieces] and work your way around. Notice the colors. You’ll see a story of heartache and triumph,” she says.

And she encourages people to look around too.

“Art is everywhere - the shape of the leaves and grass, the dirt and rocks, the tree bark and limbs with waves of nature’s etching, the blue hue of the sky as the clouds float by.”

Lorri’s work is available for purchase at Prairie Edge.



**“Always look at the eyes
[in my pieces] and work
your way around. Notice the
colors. You’ll see a story of
heartache and triumph.”**

Confidence, Community, and Care:

The Vision Behind LiveWell Medical Aesthetics

STORY BY **MIRANDA O'BRYAN HERTEL**

Look Well, Feel Well, *LiveWell*.

It's more than a motto for LiveWell Medical Aesthetics; it's a philosophy that has guided owner and CEO Courtney Vesely both professionally and personally.

When LiveWell opened its doors in 2020, Vesely envisioned more than a clinic offering injectable or skincare treatments. She wanted to create a space where women felt empowered, supported, and confident in their own skin - whatever that looked like for them.

"I wanted to create a new narrative with this space," said Vesely. "I thought, 'it doesn't have to be this way,'" she added, acknowledging the stereotypes and intimidation sometimes associated with medical aesthetics.



Vesely's Vision for Medical Aesthetics

A Rapid City native and Stevens High School graduate, Vesely went on to earn her undergraduate degree in nursing from South Dakota State University and her graduate degree from the University of Colorado. After working in dermatology and functional medicine, she found herself increasingly drawn to medical aesthetics and even more so to the conversations around it.

In her patient rooms, she saw an opportunity that would blossom into LiveWell Medical Aesthetics.

"Your journey can be your own, and whatever you do or don't decide to do is your choice," she said. "My favorite joke in the clinic is, I'm not saving your life, doing any of this. You do what is right for you, and I will just help guide your journey and process."

At LiveWell, that process is tailored to each individual. From injectables like Botox and Kybella to regenerative treatments such as Microneedling and PRF, plus a suite of esthetician services including dermaplaning and chemical peels - the options are vast. But Vesely is quick to point out that the conversation doesn't end at the surface level.

"We do a consultation and the goal is to come up with a 12 to 18 month plan that we could do to not only help you feel better today, but to help you age better over the next decade," she explained.

The future of LiveWell, Vesely added, is aimed even more deeply at the inner workings of women's health.

"It's what we're putting in our body, how we're treating our body, those kinds of things need to match [the outside]," she said. "I can give you the best treatment in the world, but it's never going to



be what it could be if we look inside too.”

Her long-term vision includes a wellness center addressing nutrition, hormones, weight, and holistic health. “I have some dreams,” Vesely said with a smile.

The Lesson of Balance

Balancing the inner and outer self isn’t just something Vesely encourages her clients to strive for; it’s a lesson she’s lived through.

She and her husband of 15 years share three sons. Vesely vividly remembers studying for her master’s degree while her newborn was in her arms, breastfed, soothed, and doing homework all at once. Years later, she remembers evenings spent finishing charts with a

toddler on her lap after opening the original LiveWell location, a rented space in downtown Rapid City.

For Vesely, those years weren’t about achieving perfect balance but about learning the give-and-take between motherhood and building a career she believed in.

“You can kind of feel guilty about everything, like, I’m not doing enough for my business. I’m not doing enough for my kids,” she admitted.

But over time, she began to see that the blending of work and motherhood wasn’t a flaw.

“I think that might even be some of the beauty of it, especially for my children, seeing the process,” she said. “They got to see me start LiveWell and work so hard, and I hope that someday they will look back at that hard work.”

Empowering Women Inside the Clinic & Beyond

Empowerment isn't just reserved for clients at LiveWell. It's built into the team culture Vesley has cultivated as the clinic has grown from a one-woman operation to a dynamic six-woman staff.

Today, her team includes aesthetic injectors Christa McCormick and Marie Patton, who specialize in administering cosmetic injectables; medical esthetician Meghan Barajas, who provides skincare services; medical assistant Leann Vance-Wenger, who supports clinical operations and assists with treatments; and office manager Jamie Rodriguez, who oversees the administrative and organizational functions of the clinic.

"It's been really cool getting to work with other women," said Vesley. "We all balance each other out; where I have weakness, somebody else is really strong."

While skill and training are essential, Vesley said it's ultimately the character and personality of her team that

make LiveWell exceptional.

"I care more about who they are as a person," she said. "I think you can teach anybody skills. But I can't teach you to be a kind, good person who wants to make women feel good about themselves, who wants to empower other women."

The commitment to outstanding medical care, empowerment, kindness, and authenticity has become the heart of the LiveWell experience.

The Best Version of You

For Vesely, aesthetics isn't about achieving someone else's ideal. It's about helping each woman discover and express her own.

"We help them embody the best version of themselves, whatever that looks like," she said.

Whether she's planning the future of a wellness-integrated clinic or ushering a client through her first treatment, Vesely's mission remains the same: enhancing natural beauty and boosting confidence.

Because to look well, feel well, and live well, she believes, is something every woman deserves.





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girl's best friend.*



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promising future of*
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Chantel McDonnell, Kari Nielsen, and Kayla Moslander
are dedicated to uplifting and empowering each other. They are
also passionate about showcasing the women you love, women you
support, and women whose businesses you want to see thrive.

Read on **TO LEARN HOW THESE THREE
WOMEN ARE WORKING BEHIND-THE-SCENES TO BRING
BLACK HILLS WOMAN BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES.**

BH&K

*"We want this
magazine to be
representative
of you."*



HOW *three women* ARE LEADING A WAY FORWARD

*I*n April 2024, it was announced Black Hills Woman would have to pause, and the sign-off stated, there's so much more to be written. Now, as the new owner, Chantel is drafting another beginning for the magazine.

"I always looked forward to the upcoming issue! And I want to keep writing stories that encourage

women, can connect them, and make them dream that they can do anything," Chantel says.

Above all else, Chantel believes Black Hills Woman is a community effort. "This magazine is not about me. It's about highlighting all the amazing women in the Black Hills," she says.

She recognizes the entrepreneurial leadership of



the women – Tracy Bernard and Kelsey Parker – who came before her to build the foundation for this popular local publication. “I hope to continue Tracy and Kelsey’s mission of making this the number one read (and most anticipated) local magazine each month.”

Chantel plans to carry on this legacy and expand the possibilities with her collaborators Kari and Kayla.

Kari started as a staff writer for Black Hills Woman in 2022 before becoming Managing Editor. Now, she returns to the leadership team in a new role as Editor-in-Chief. She wants to remain





loyal to what readers have grown to love about the magazine while at the same time, she expects (and hopes) there will be growth and change ahead.

"I am grateful to Chantel for the opportunity to take on this new role and her faith in me to do it well," Kari says. "The biggest challenge of relaunching anything is staying true to the foundation that built it, but also, pivoting just enough to make it new and exciting."

Kayla is also always looking for new creative challenges and growth opportunities as an innovative graphic designer. That's what led her to join the Black Hills Woman leadership team in September 2023.

"It just felt like the perfect fit. The magazine's focus on local women and inspiring stories really resonated with me, and I loved the idea of getting to create something fresh each month," Kayla says.

After meeting Kari and Kayla, Chantel felt ready to embrace the challenges of relaunching

Black Hills Woman, and these three women are jumping right in to bring a fresh perspective to the publication. "We have some awesome surprises," Chantel teases. "So, stay tuned!"

WHAT IT MEANS TO *"go to work"* FOR THE MAGAZINE

As the lead wordsmith, Kari helps shape compelling stories about local women from varying businesses and all walks of life. She says reading and writing have always been fun for her, even when it's labeled as work. "Obviously, editing is different from sitting down to read a book of my choice, but the reward is the same. Both ways I get to do something I love."

"At the heart of my editorial vision is a love for this community. I was born and raised here, and am just so passionate about the people and places that make it great," Kari shares. For each story, extra time, energy, and care go into crafting the words as well as creating eye-catching visuals.

When Kayla designs an article, she loves the creative freedom, but it can be a balancing act to create compelling visuals while maintaining a consistent look and feel for the magazine. "When I work on an issue, I tackle it story by story, experimenting with images, color, typography, and layouts until everything feels cohesive," she explains.

Kayla appreciates how much the team trusts her ideas as a designer. “They bring the content, and I get to bring it to life visually, which makes for a fun and productive process,” she says.

But working for Black Hills Woman is more than group chats, endless email chains, and sitting behind computer screens. It includes prioritizing play, and spending quality time with loved ones. Creative ideas can often emerge while at home with their families, playing games or reading books, or out exploring the Black Hills on a hike or camping adventure.

Learning new things helps to fuel their creativity, too. “I am currently trying to be a better cook, getting back into yoga, excited about gardening next year, and we hope to start traveling a little more in the future,” Chantel says.

Ultimately, when describing what it’s like to work for the magazine, all three women offer rave reviews. “We all thrive on communication, which makes asking for help and giving feedback all the more welcome,” Kari says.

For Chantel, women supporting women means “there is no judgment. It’s about women who love, encourage, and value each other.”

It’s clear that her philosophy is guiding the future of Black Hills Woman from the inside out.



by women FOR WOMEN *about women*

Chantel, Kari, and Kayla are putting in the effort to feature the incredible women who live, work, and love our communities. To get the magazine up and running again requires focused attention to day-to-day details as well as a greater understanding of what it means to be women supporting women.

“We want this magazine to be representative of you. For you to resonate with an article you read, to attend an event you first heard of here, to connect with someone new,” Kari says, encouraging readers to see themselves reflected in the pages. “We are always looking for suggestions on who you want to see featured here!”

“Yes, we are hoping to continue to highlight amazing women in the community, but we need your help,” Chantel says. “If you know a woman that you feel should be considered for the magazine, please connect with us on social media, via email, or through our website at blackhillswoman.com.”

“We cannot have this magazine without you.”

Make peace
with all the women
you once were.

Lay flowers
at their feet.

Offer them incense
and honey
and forgiveness.

Honor them
and give them
your silence.

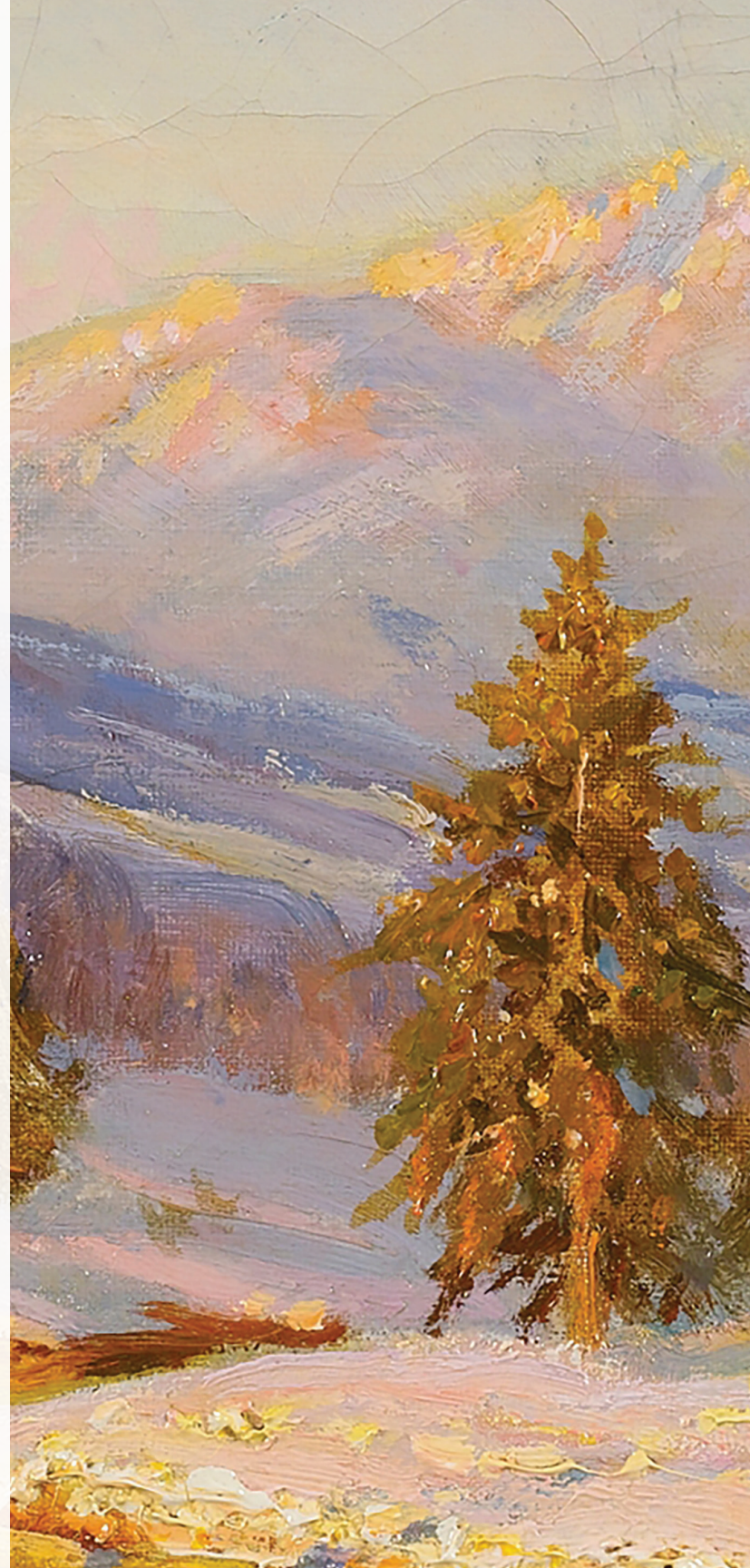
Listen.

Bless them
and let them be.

For they are the bones
of the temple
you sit in now.

For they are
the rivers
of wisdom
leading you toward
the sea.

*I Have Been a
Thousand Different Women*
by Emory Hall.





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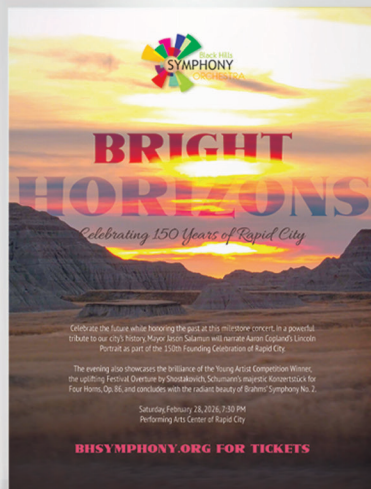
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From pain to power:

Gaia Integrative Health

STORY BY **MADIGAN SCHMITZ**



Before the pandemic, Melanie Munson had never set foot in South Dakota. She had spent her whole life moving from place to place, having lived everywhere from Washington D.C. to Austria. After COVID-19 uprooted her life — and her newly minted integrative health practice — she took a chance on Rapid City and moved to the Black Hills, with hopes for a new start for both her life and her practice.

“South Dakota was never on my radar, and I looked up pictures of the Black Hills, and I was like, ‘Oh my gosh!’ I couldn’t believe I never knew about this place. I moved here sight-unseen

"People come into my practice in tears, and they don't want to go on in life because they don't feel well. To be able to give back to them means the world."

and had to start over," she says.

Today, Melanie is the founder of Gaia Integrative Health, LLC, a clinic that specializes in whole-body wellness.

After years of struggling with her own health issues and being misdiagnosed by doctors from all over, Melanie was able to find significant relief through acupuncture and functional/integrative medicine, which is what led her to pursue this form of healthcare — with hopes of helping people in a similar situation to her own.

"I went through the conventional system and for 23 years they just couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. Once someone

finally figured it out, and I got better, I decided I wanted to go back and help all the people who weren't getting help. I really wanted to help people that were going through the same thing, who were getting either misdiagnosed or told there was nothing wrong," says Melanie.

She went on to receive her masters degree from Texas Health and Science University and her doctorate at AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine. After completing her schooling, she rented a room in Austin, Texas, and opened up her independent practice.

Following her cross-country move, Melanie now operates a thriving full-service practice centered on the wellness of her patients. With red light therapy, functional medicine, acupuncture, oriental medicine, biomat therapy, and nutritional guidance, she's able to offer procedures that run the wellness gamut. Each service represents a piece in a much larger puzzle, and while they have their individual benefits, when working in tandem, that's when patients are able to see the most results.

Getting to help people in such a significant way on a daily basis is powerful for Melanie. After being sick for so long, she knows that her practice and work holds a lot of weight.

"When I was so sick, I literally could hardly function. I had multiple surgeries, I had tremors, I couldn't walk properly, and I couldn't speak properly, I felt like my life was over. When people come to me in that



state, and they start to see improvement, it's so incredible. People come into my practice in tears, and they don't want to go on in life because they don't feel well. To be able to give back to them means the world," she says.

Four years after picking up and moving north, Melanie still finds herself in awe of what she's created with Gaia, and the opportunity she has to do what she loves, in a place she loves just as much. She has patients who have been seeing her at Gaia since its beginning, and to be able to experience their success firsthand and attribute it to her work and effort, is unlike any other feeling.

"It's just amazing. I came here, started over

and didn't know that it would work, but I had faith that whatever I put my heart and soul toward, it was going to work. I sit here stunned with my life, because I created it, I pictured it, I visualized it and made it happen."

For those interested in functional medicine, taking the first step is the hardest — and most important — thing you can do. It takes a certain level of belief that you have the potential and power to get well, and Melanie is here to help you find that belief from beginning to end. Just because there's a popular way to treat an ailment, doesn't mean it's the only way. If you're ready to take the leap, there's a world of healing that could be waiting for you.



FOOD *for* LIFE

STORY BY **MADIGAN SCHMITZ**

for Sammi Ricke.

HAVING HER OWN BLOG IS SO MUCH MORE THAN POSTING ONLINE. SHE'S FOUND IT TO BE A BEAUTIFUL WAY TO CONNECT WITH HER COMMUNITY, WHILE SHARING BITS AND PIECES OF WHAT REAL LIFE LOOKS LIKE.

Sammi's blog Happi Homemade was created in 2014 as a place for her to post her recipes. Over the years, the blog exploded, and with the help of two friends and website-running gurus — Shyanne and Brittany — the blog was able to reach people far beyond her corner of the southern Black Hills.

From dinners to cookies and everything in between, Happi Homemade has allowed Sammi the platform to share all about her life, parenting, her faith, and all the meals that come in between the big moments.

Cozy season has arrived in the Black Hills.

Find some of Sammi's favorite soup recipes for a little winter warmth on the next page.





crack chicken chili

This crock pot crack chicken chili recipe is a high-protein, creamy, cheesy, veggie-packed comfort food perfect for meal prep and busy weeknights!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 15 ounce can black beans, undrained
- 10 ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained
- 4 ounce can fire roasted green chiles, undrained
- 1 C chicken broth (or beef broth)
- 1½ C frozen corn
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 3 Tbsp ranch seasoning mix (or 1 ounce packet)
- 1 Tbsp ground chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 3-4 large boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 2 lbs)
- 1 C plain Greek yogurt
- 1 C shredded cheddar cheese

TOPPINGS

- 8 slices cooked bacon, crumbled
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- chives, green onion and/or cilantro (choose your favorite or use all three!)

instructions

1. In a 6 quart slow cooker, stir together the onion, bell pepper, black beans, diced tomatoes, green chiles, corn, broth, garlic, and seasonings until combined. Place the chicken breasts in the slow cooker and submerge under the liquid.
2. Cover and cook on HIGH for 3-5 hours (ours is ready at 4 hours) or LOW for 5-8 hours, until the chicken is tender and shreds easily.
3. Transfer the chicken to a bowl and use two forks to shred it into bite-size pieces. Set aside. Set the slow cooker to WARM or LOW.
4. Place the Greek yogurt in a small mixing bowl or 2-cup liquid measuring cup. Using a ladle, slowly whisk in ½-¾ cup hot chili until combined (see notes). Set aside.
5. Return the shredded chicken, shredded cheese, and tempered yogurt to the chili. Stir until the cheese is melted and all ingredients are incorporated.
6. Taste for seasoning and adjust if necessary. If the chili is lacking saltiness, remember the toppings (bacon and shredded cheese) will add salt and flavor.
7. Turn off the slow cooker and ladle the chili into bowls and garnish with the toppings.
8. Store the chili in an airtight container in the fridge for up to four days.



healthy zuppa toscana soup

Skip the restaurant options, and make this healthy zuppa toscana soup recipe in one pot in under an hour for a nutritious comfort food instead!

INGREDIENTS

- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 lb ground turkey sausage
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 red potatoes, chopped into 1/2-3/4" pieces
- 4 C vegetable or chicken broth
- 4 C water
- 2 tsp minced garlic or 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 4 C kale, chopped or torn into small pieces
- 1/2 C half & half
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

instructions

1. In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, add the chopped bacon and cook until browned/crispy. Remove the bacon from the pan and let drain on a paper towel lined plate.
2. To that same pot over medium-high heat, add the raw turkey sausage and cook until browned. Remove the browned sausage and place on the plate of bacon.
3. To the soup pot, add the chopped onion and potatoes to the rest of the bacon drippings (if none left, spray the bottom of the pot with non-stick cooking spray) and sauté on medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes.
4. Pour in the broth, water, minced garlic, and Italian seasoning. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.
5. Turn the burner off and stir in the kale, half & half, salt, black pepper, cooked bacon and browned sausage. Let the soup sit, covered, for 15 minutes to allow the kale to soften and the flavors to infuse.
6. Taste and add more seasonings, if desired. Top each bowl with a few shavings of fresh Parmesan!
7. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.



Creamy Tomato Basil Soup

This creamy homemade tomato basil soup is packed with fresh flavor and ready in under 30 minutes using just ten simple ingredients!

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Tbsp butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 oz tomato paste
- 4 C chicken broth
- 28 oz can whole tomatoes (see notes)
- 28 oz can fire roasted tomatoes
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 5 large fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1 C half and half (see notes)

instructions

1. In a soup pot, sauté onions in the butter over medium heat until translucent. Stir in the tomato paste and cook while stirring until it starts to brown or about 3-5 minutes.
2. Pour in the chicken stock and scrape the bottom of the pot with a wooden spatula to remove any caramelized brown bits (brown bits=flavor!).
3. Add the canned whole tomatoes, fire roasted tomatoes, garlic powder and salt. Bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes, covered. Remove from heat.
4. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup right in the pot, or once the soup is not hot, transfer the soup in batches to a blender or food processor to puree. (DO NOT add hot liquids to a blender or food processor as they will expand and possibly explode causing injury.)
5. After the soup is smooth, add in the chopped basil and half and half. Pulse a few times with the immersion blender to incorporate. Add in additional salt, if needed.
6. Store the soup in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days.



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recipes visit*

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FAMILY FUN *at the Journey Museum* STEAM SATURDAYS



TAMERA MIYASATO



WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU VISITED THE JOURNEY MUSEUM IN RAPID CITY? CAN YOU RECALL A FAVORITE EXHIBIT, WORK OF ART, EVENT, OR PROGRAM?

IF NOT, IT MIGHT BE TIME TO EMBARK ON ANOTHER JOURNEY THROUGH SCIENCE, ART, HISTORY, CULTURE, AND THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE BLACK HILLS.





STEAM SATURDAYS are a top reason to return to the Museum, especially for families in search of fun ways to spend time together (and away from screens).

Every Saturday from October through April, families can choose between a morning or afternoon session. The cost of these popular youth programs is included with regular admission to The Journey and always free for members. No need to pre-register, just show up ready to play, explore, and possibly get your hands a little messy.

“There’s no right or wrong way to participate; it’s about curiosity, creativity, and connection. Parents are strongly encouraged to jump in alongside their kids. We’ve seen some of the best learning moments happen when adults and children are discovering something together,” Tamera Miyasato says.

Miyasato joined The Journey in September 2025 as the new Educational Programs Director. With more than 15 years of experience as a teacher, consultant, and school administrator, she brings a unique perspective to designing learning programs at the museum.

Find out how activities are developed for STEAM Saturdays, what it looks like to participate, and why Tamera Miyasato’s leadership is inspiring life-long learning at The Journey.

WHO COMES UP WITH ACTIVITIES FOR STEAM SATURDAYS?

“Before I joined The Journey, STEAM Saturdays were designed and facilitated by Katelyn Carpenter. She did an exceptional job building the foundation of the program, and the kids absolutely love her. Katelyn and I continue to collaborate closely,” Miyasato says.

“Some ideas come from our museum galleries and temporary exhibits, others from what’s happening in the season such as snow, migration, or planting, or from local stories that connect children to where they live.

It's a dynamic, evolving process, full of testing, laughter, and the occasional mess, but that's part of the fun."

Each month has a unifying theme. "Within that theme, every week's project can stand on its own, but together they weave a web of learning, one idea connecting to the next," Miyasato says. "It's important to me that families begin to see how science, art, and storytelling are interrelated and grounded in the world around us."

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?

"Each session starts with a simple framework or demonstration. Katelyn and I might model how to create a rain cloud, launch a paper rocket, or test water quality. From there, families take the lead. Parents and children work side by side, observing, experimenting, and talking about what they notice," Miyasato explains.

Oftentimes, families are surprised by how simple the materials or setup might seem. However, that's all part of the plan! These learning experiences are intentionally designed to focus on discovery, creativity, and conversation. According to Miyasato, keeping it simple makes that possible.

Science journals are a new addition to the program designed to integrate multiple disciplines

(e.g., science, art, literacy, reflection) and encourage children to express their understanding in creative ways. "I jokingly assign the journals as 'homework,' because for some reason, the kids love that," Miyasato says.

"But the real idea is to extend their curiosity beyond the museum. Each journal includes extension activities and reflection questions to carry learning home... As the program continues to grow, my hope is that STEAM Saturdays will evolve into even more collaborative design challenges — a space where curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving come together in ways that are fun, hands-on, and deeply connected to our community. For now, we're building that foundation one Saturday at a time."

HOW CAN FAMILIES MAKE THE MOST OF STEAM SATURDAYS?

To get the most out of the experience, Miyasato encourages families to arrive early. Each session begins with a short demonstration to help everyone understand the activity.

Families are encouraged to drop-in for STEAM sessions on Saturdays, but programming is specifically designed for ages 5+. Families with children under five years old often get creative by bringing a helper to take younger kids to explore other parts of the Museum while older siblings

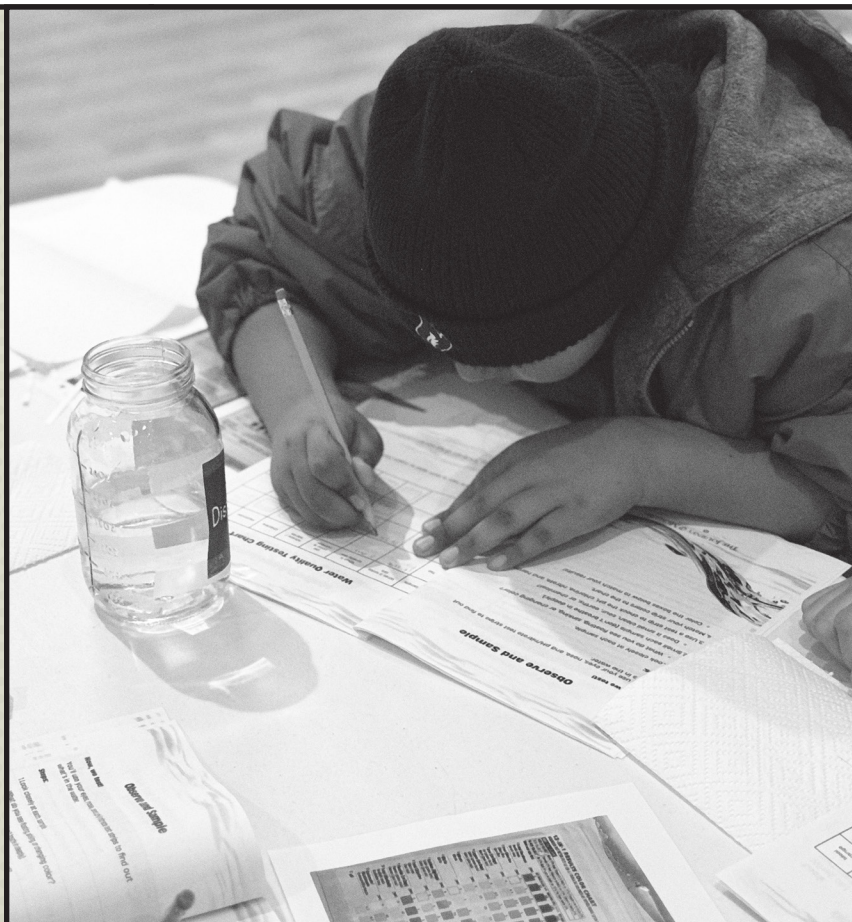
participate in the program.

“We have plenty of spaces that are perfect for early learners, including our Paleontology Tent, where they can dig for fossils, our LEGO table, and the STEM Lab, where they can play and explore freely. Each space also has books for reading, and coloring pages or games,” Miyasato says. “So, families can still enjoy the experience together in ways that fit their ages and interests.”

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO LEADING AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING?

Tamera Miyasato’s time at The Journey has helped her see that leadership doesn’t have to mean standing as the head of a school or at the front of the room. “Sometimes [leadership] means creating spaces for growth, for sparking change, for quietly leading, and for helping transformation take root in ways that feel sustainable and true,” she says.

“Coming to The Journey Museum feels like a return to creativity, curiosity, and community connection. It allows me to continue contributing to education and cultural learning, but from a place that honors reflection and collaboration. It’s work that allows me to keep growing while still serving others.”



A FIELD GUIDE TO

2026

STORY BY KARI
NIELSEN

10 TO-DO'S FOR THE NEW YEAR

1

BE KIND:

Be kind to others and to yourself. You never know what someone is going through, so make a point to bless others with random acts of kindness and intentionality. Remember to also give yourself grace, as we are often our own harshest critics. Embrace every version of yourself — the person you are now and the person you are striving to become.

2

CONSUME LESS:

In a world driven by consumption, it's easy to confuse needs and wants. Constantly dwelling on what you don't have influences feelings of inadequacy, as well as, impacts stress and anxiety. Limit your exposure to fast fashion, excessive entertainment, and social media to maintain a clear become.

3

GO OUT WITH THE GIRLS MORE:

A study done this last year suggested women need a girls night out every 22 days. It was found that doing so reduced anxiety, boosted oxytocin, and made women feel more supported. Coupled with more scientific data that shows female connections are essential to a women's health and well-being, all that's left to ask is — where are we going and when?

4

READ MORE:

Did you know that reading offers substantial benefits for your health? Think of it as a mental workout that enhances your memory and elevates your mood. Challenge yourself to swap screen time for a good old-fashioned book. The sensory experience of reading physical pages (although, e-readers are great tools) is both relaxing and easier on the eyes.

5

UTILIZE YOUR PTO DAYS:

Take the breaks you deserve! Paid time off is part of your compensation and should be utilized fully. Maximize your benefits by strategically planning paid time off around existing federal holidays. Also known as “bridge days,” this approach can transform a short weekend into an extended vacation.

turn 16 PTO DAYS *into* 62 DAYS OFF IN 2026!

**DEC. 31–
JAN. 4**

(1 PTO DAY)

JAN. 16–19

(1 PTO DAY)

FEB. 13–16

(1 PTO DAY)

APRIL 3–6

(0 PTO DAYS)

MAY 22–25

(1 PTO DAY)

JUNE 18–21

(1 PTO DAY)

JULY 3–6

(1 PTO DAY)

SEPT. 4–7

(1 PTO DAY)

OCT. 10–13

(1 PTO DAY)

NOV. 11–15

(2 PTO DAYS)

NOV. 21–29

(3 PTO DAYS)

**DEC. 24–
JAN. 3**

(3 PTO DAYS)

6

MAKE TIME FOR SELF-CARE:

While self-care looks different for everyone, its importance is universal. Self-care improves physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Whether your routine involves getting a monthly massage, exercising regularly, spending time in prayer, listening to music, connecting with family, or simply ensuring you get eight hours of sleep, self-care is a necessary personal investment.

7

DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE:

Is there anything more satisfying than getting rid of things that no longer serve you? Getting rid of toys your kids haven't played with in months, clothes you haven't worn for years, or that closet full of things you thought you might need but never did. 'Less is often more,' and an organized space not only looks better but also significantly improves your mental well-being.

8

SET A GOAL: There is a lot of pressure to set goals in the new year. But this isn't just about resolutions, the process provides essential time for self-reflection and a focus for the future. A new year offers a fresh start, but goals should be set continuously. Setting goals, big or small, creates milestones that offer a sense of accomplishment and reward. Embrace goal setting as an opportunity to test your limits and set your sights high.

9

PRIORITIZE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS:

Prioritizing meaningful connections is key to genuine well-being. As staying connected becomes more challenging with age, focus on healthy relationships with individuals who share your values. Being intentional helps cultivate a healthy support system and a deeper sense of belonging.

10

TAKE A TRIP: Someone once said, "Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer." This is because travel provides a wealth of new experiences, knowledge, memories, and connections. It also provides a much needed escape from everyday life and a valuable opportunity to invest in yourself — to rest, recharge, and return with a renewed perspective.



Heidi Pullman

TRAVEL ADVISOR & ENTREPRENEUR

I have always loved building businesses that bring joy and meaning to people's lives. Since I travel often myself and love exploring new places, becoming a travel advisor was the perfect fit. I love creating vacations that feel effortless, personal, and unforgettable. It's completely **FREE** to work with me; I would love to take the stress out of planning your perfect vacation.

A TRIP FOR COUPLES: ATELIER PLAYA MUJERES

An adults-only resort that delivers luxury, comfort, and pampering. Every room is a spacious suite with a private balcony, giving couples room to relax, reconnect, and enjoy peaceful mornings and quiet evenings. The resort offers multiple pools (including a fun swim-up bar), a beautiful stretch of beach, and a variety of activities for couples who want to combine downtime and adventure. Enjoy evenings by grabbing a cocktail followed by a romantic dinner at one of 13+ restaurants. Friendly service is at the top of the list for this polished and reliable resort, perfect for any couple looking to reconnect in style.

A TRIP FOR THE GIRLS: 3-NIGHT CRUISE (CELEBRITY CRUISES)

A Celebrity girls trip is truly the ideal mix of fun, sun, and connection. Ships are modern and stylish, staterooms are comfortable, service is fantastic, and waking up to ocean views with your girlfriends makes catching up that much sweeter. A Bahamas itinerary is perfect because it blends fun and relaxation without needing a full week away. Spend the day by the pool, check out the spa, or join a dance class—everyone can do exactly what they're in the mood for. Evenings are best — dinner together, live music, rooftop cocktails, and endless laughs. It's effortless, stress-free, and full of moments you'll talk about long after you're back home.

A TRIP FOR THE FAMILY: BEACHES TURKS & CAICOS

A resort for every age and personality, complete with spacious rooms and attentive staff. The waterpark is a huge hit with kids and teens, the beach is beautiful, and the daily activities make staying entertained easy without ever feeling rushed. Younger guests will love the Sesame Street character experiences; parents will appreciate having a safe, well-run environment for their kids. The resort has a plethora of dining options, so even picky eaters will find something they love. Beaches Turks & Caicos provides a laid-back but high-quality atmosphere that makes family travel feel effortless. It's the kind of trip both kids and parents will love.



HEALING IN SMALL

THE POWER

for WOMEN

For many women, the phrase self-care brings up mixed feelings. We know it matters. We know we feel better when we do it. But with work, family, appointments, and the constant pull to take care of everything and everyone, self-care often slips to the bottom of the list. And when we finally remember it, we're usually met with a little guilt—like it's one more thing we're “supposed” to be doing perfectly.

That's why micro-self-care matters so much.

These are tiny, intentional moments—sometimes just 30 to 60 seconds—that help calm the nervous system and bring us back to ourselves. They're easy to fit into real life, and when practiced consistently, they build genuine resilience over time.

One of the simplest micro-practices is a quick grounding breath. Inhale for four, hold for two, exhale for six. That longer exhale gently signals to your body

M O M E N T S :

of MICRO-SELF-CARE WHO DO IT ALL

— You're safe. It's okay to slow down. It's amazing how even a single breath cycle can interrupt a stress spiral.

Another helpful technique is bilateral movement—alternating tapping on the legs or shoulders for a few seconds. This small action helps the brain regulate during overwhelm, especially when emotions are running high.

Micro-self-care can also be sensory. Step outside for 30 seconds and notice the air. Put both feet on the ground and feel the support under you. Turn on one song that always lifts your mood. These tiny moments bring you back to the present instead of running on stress autopilot.

Sometimes micro-self-care isn't about adding anything at all—it's about permission.

Permission to pause.

Permission to take a breath before responding.

Permission to rest for a moment instead of powering through exhaustion.

These moments are small, but they're deeply healing.

What makes micro-self-care so powerful is that it fits into the life you already have. You can practice it in the car line, between meetings, while making dinner, or even during a quick bathroom break when the day is a lot. It becomes part of your natural rhythm instead of something you have to schedule.

And over time, these micro-moments add up. They help you notice stress sooner, soften tension before it becomes burnout, and move through your day with a little more steadiness. Most importantly, they send a message you deserve to hear: Your needs matter, even in small ways.

As we step into the new year, instead of aiming for big self-care routines that require more time and energy than you have, try embracing these small, meaningful moments. They're simple, sustainable, and incredibly supportive—especially for women who do it all.

BHW BOOK CLUB

What's On Our Shelf

CHANTEL'S PICK

Violet Thistlewaite Is Not a Villain Anymore
by Emily Krempholtz

Who doesn't enjoy a love story full of magic? This caught my attention because of the storyline — a villain wanting to change to do good. I am one who loves happy endings. This book also adds in thrill, teamwork, magic, and what it means to be a good person.

GENRE: FANTASY/ROMANTIC FICTION

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Violet, plant witch, moved to Dragon's Rest to start over. She was raised by a villain to be a villain and that was not for her. She is trying to move past her dark past and start a flower shop to spread joy. This is challenging because her grumpy space mate, Nathaniel, alchemist, likes to spread doom and gloom. But when a mysterious blint starts to endanger all the living plants in Dragon's rest, Nathaniel and Violet must work together to fight evil and find their own happily-ever-after.

KAYLA'S PICK

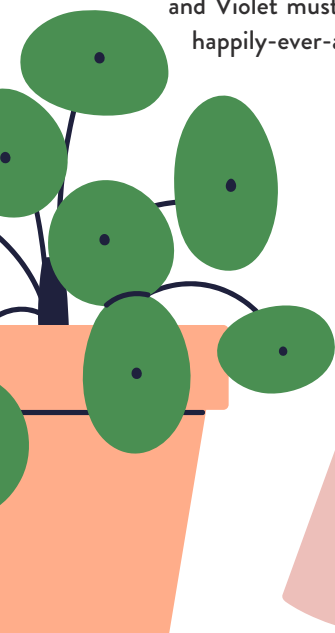
The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah

I could not put this book down. Alaska is a place I know nothing about; I have a better understanding and appreciation for the wild place it is because of this book. It is an intense story of survival and a sweet love story as well. I would recommend it to anyone!

GENRE: HISTORICAL FICTION

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

This story centers on 13-year-old Leni as her family navigates a move to a remote part of Alaska in 1974. The harsh wilderness would be its own obstacle, but the bigger one comes from inside as Leni's father suffers greatly from PTSD. This is a story of survival, from the climate and from the threat of domestic violence. Leni and her mother are forced to combat their new surroundings and forge new relationships that ultimately lead to resilience, hope, and love found in the darkest of places.



KARI'S PICK

Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

My most impactful read of 2025, this story was incredibly beautiful. A reminder that kindness, generosity, and intentionality should be given to everyone we encounter. One of those books that will stay with you long after you've finished reading it.

GENRE: LITERARY FICTION

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

This book centers on an older gentleman named Theo who mysteriously moves to the town of "Golden." Without sharing much, if anything, about himself, Theo begins buying portraits of local residents and bestowing them to those same people. Through the interactions with each recipient, connections are made, lives are changed, and a community grows closer together. Woven together through the act of giving, this story showcases the transformative power of kindness and the importance of living intentionally.

SAVING A SPOT FOR...

This Book Made Me Think of You by Libby Page

GENRE: CONTEMPORARY FICTION

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2026

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