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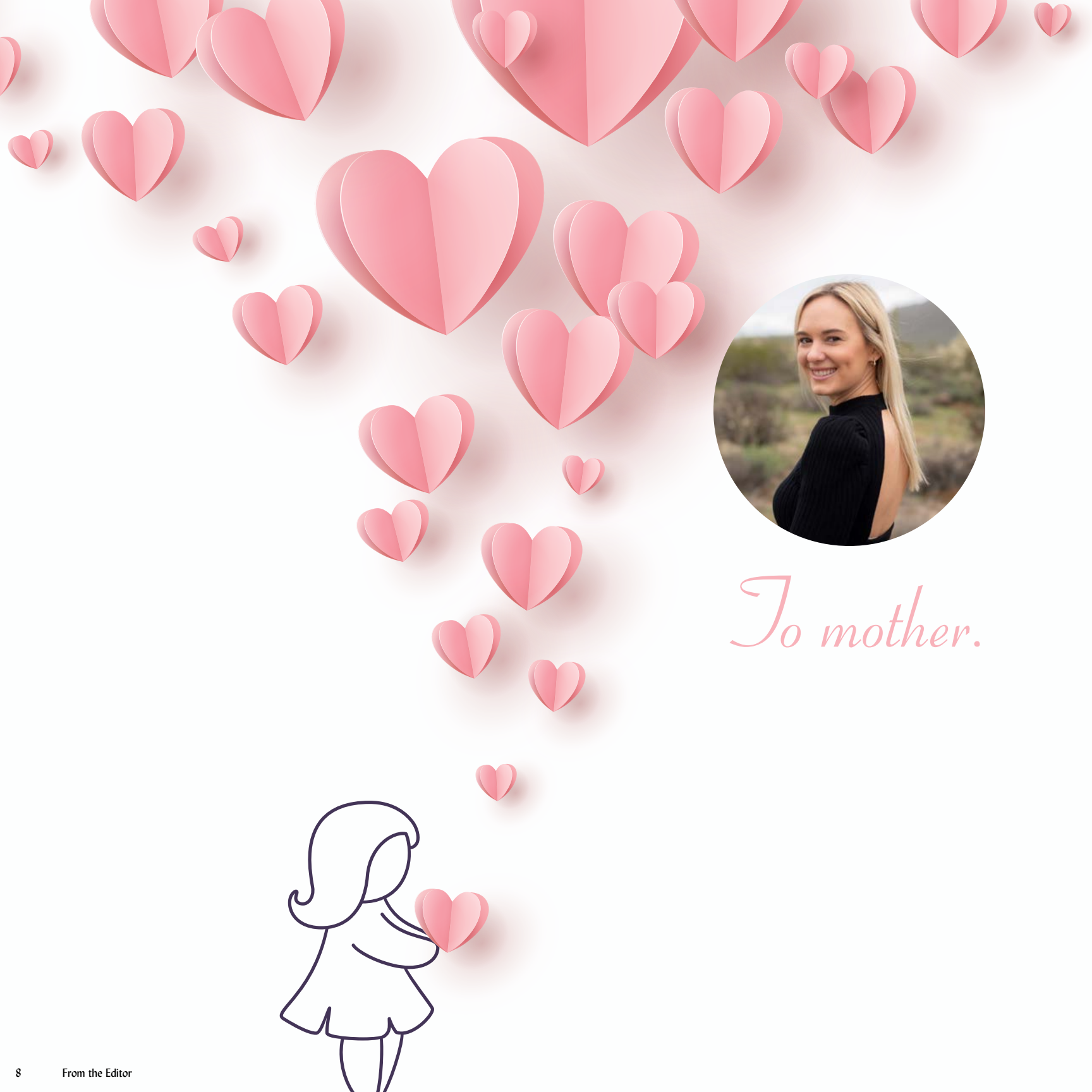
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To mother.

Biologically speaking, I am not a mother. When meeting new people, it's usually the second question I get asked, right after, "What do you do?" The stranger will kindly inquire, "Do you have kids?" or "How many kids do you have?". "I don't," I say. The responses are varied – sometimes you see shock, sympathy, and/or confusion.

I've never taken offense to the question. I think the question is well-intentioned, inquisitive, and intended to find common ground.

For me, the question doesn't hurt because I'm not in the midst of infertility treatments.

For me, the question doesn't hurt because I haven't recently experienced the pain of a miscarriage.

For me, the question doesn't hurt because I'm not aching to be a mother and only experiencing disappointment when I take a pregnancy test.

To women quietly hurting, the question could be a gut-punch.

Sometimes people dive a little deeper. "Why don't you have kids?" Some people inquire about the life childless people live. The interest is sincere. It's as if "childless people" could be an exhibit at a zoo. What do they eat? How many hours do they sleep? How many naps do they take? What do they do with their free time?

By definition, I do not have any human children that I love, care, and provide for. I am not a mother.

But, what is it to mother, the verb, not the noun? The list is so grand and lengthy, a day is not sufficient to honor them sufficiently.

I have a mother (noun) who mothered (verb) me. I have many people in my life who have mothered me, too.

Mother (verb):

1. To unconditionally love another.
2. To care deeply for.
3. To give thyself to the benefit of others.
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9. To mentor and guide.

On this Mother's Day, celebrate your mother! And, celebrate those who have mothered you, too.

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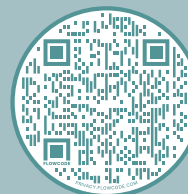
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Oh baby

Honoring Expecting Mothers

Compiled by Kari Nielsen

Photos by Riley Winter Photography

As we get ready to celebrate Mother's Day, we wanted to highlight some expecting mothers in our area. To give them the opportunity to speak on what it means to be a mother, what they hope to teach their children, and what they've learned from their own mothers. To honor this incredible milestone they are about to encounter - becoming a mother. For whether it is for the first time or not, bringing a child into this world is nothing short of a miracle.

So, here's to mothers. These eleven and every single mother reading this. For we all know..."In giving birth to our babies, we may find that we give birth to new possibilities within ourselves." - Myla and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Hannah Reddest-Gayton

Due July 19th

She will be my first born, and will be named Louella Brooklyn-Grace LeRoy.

Best parenting advice you've received:

Probably to just not be scared and let pregnancy and motherhood be the best experience of our lives. Because to us as Lakota people, our children are sacred and sent to us to guide and teach us through life as we do them.

What you learned from your Mom:

To never give up. When times were hard, she always found a way to make things happen and always went above and beyond for us to ensure we had the best life. Even if it wasn't much.

What you hope you'll teach your kid?

I hope to teach my daughter that her journey on this earth is truly a blessing and that her purpose is inevitable. That nothing is impossible as long as she never loses hope and keeps her eye on what she really wants.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

A TV/movie mom that inspires me is Selena's mom. Though she is a real person, the way her character in the movie believed, trusted, and pushed Selena to do her best was really inspiring to see. Because when we want our children to succeed, supportive parents are SUPER important.





Jacqee Schaefer

Due June 1st

First time Momma

Best parenting advice you've received:

Don't wish the time away and soak in every moment

What you learned from your mom:

Expose my children to as many activities as I can.

What you hope you'll teach your kid:

I hope I'll teach my kids the importance of strong character in today's world.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

Sophia Petrillo from Golden Girls





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Abbigale Winter

Due June 25, 2023

Mother of Ari, he'll turn 2 right before his little brother comes.

Best parenting advice you've received:

Follow your instincts!

What you learned from your mom:

Always stand up for your kids, never quit rooting for them, and always be there when they need you.

What you hope you'll teach your kids:

To love themselves and be confident in who they are.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate:

Gloria from Modern Family. She's hilarious but also she's always there for her son.



Allyx Marie Biggs

Due July 2023

First time momma

Best parenting advice you've received:

Take time out of the day for myself, not to be afraid to ask for help, know I don't have to do it all on my own, and not to compare myself or my child to others.

What you learned from your mom:

What I've learned from my mom is that being a parent is challenging but rewarding. No matter what, she is going to always be there for me and have my back. She loves unconditionally and she is my best friend.

What you hope you'll teach your kid:

I hope to teach my children their own worth, to fight for what they want, and to never give up.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

Leigh Ann Tuohy, from the *Blindside*. Competitive, yet supportive. Someone who doesn't let others push them around and sticks up for what she believes in.



Jenna Shultz

Due August 19th

First time momma after 3 years of infertility, 4 IUI's, and 2 miscarriages. We are thrilled to meet our August bundle!

Best parenting advice you've received:

Be consistent and stand behind what you tell your kids.

What you learned from your mom:

Traditions and family time are important.

What you hope you'll teach your kid:

How important communication is and how going through trials can bring growth.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

Rebecca Pearson, from This is Us. Cliche, but you could feel how much she cared for her kids and those around her.





Shelby Wentz

Due May 5th, 2023

Mother of Chloe (11), Collins (5), Colbie (2 1/2) and expecting Baby Girl # 4.

Best parenting advice you've received:

Take the time to be present with your kids. I left the workforce almost a year ago to be home with my girls. It has been the best decision I could have made. Time is precious and it goes so fast! Being a mom has brought me so much joy, it's given me a sense of purpose and I am so glad I get to fully own my Motherhood.

What you learned from your mom:

Create memories and experiences with your kids. Some of my favorite childhood memories are simple traditions like picnics at the park, driving through the hills, and swimming at Pactola in the summer.

What you hope you'll teach your kids:

I hope I teach my girls to be disciples and followers of Jesus.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

If I could be like any TV mom I think I would want to be like Rebecca Pearson from This Is Us. I love how she is so attentive to her children and continues to be present in her children's adult lives too.



Kattie Bland

Due June 4, 2023

Mother of one son. This will be my 2nd son.

Best Parenting Advice You've Received:

You will never have this day back. The tough ones, the easy ones, the extremely sleep deprived ones, enjoy it, soak it in - before you know it they will be kissing you goodbye and have a life of their own.

What you learned from your mom:

My mom has always been the rock of our family. She supported everything I have ever done and has never missed anything important. She taught me to wear my heart on my sleeve and always be my true self no matter what others think.

What you hope to teach your kids:

I hope that I can teach my kids to work hard in everything they do while being humble and kind. If they have a dream, chase it, don't give up until they achieve it.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate:

Sandra Bullock from The Blind Side.



Lynsey Ward

Due August 10 to a baby girl!

Mother of a son who is turning 2 in June.

Best parenting advice you've received:

You were given these children because you are who they need. You have the soul to love them even on their hardest days. You have the smile that they crave and the touch to make everything okay. You are their sunshine and comfort. On the days that seem to go on forever and you're questioning if you can do this, "Remember: do what you can, let the rest go, and love is almost always the answer. You've got this."

What you learned from your mom:

I learned how to sacrificially love through all of life's ups and downs. I wouldn't be the mama I am without experiencing first hand the constant love, encouragement, and support that my mom gave me.

What do you hope you'll teach your kids:

Gosh there are so many hopes of what to teach my children. Big ones are to be kind, patient, accepting, and understanding. I think the most important lesson right now for me to teach them is to know who they uniquely are and to freaking love themselves for it.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate?

I don't really have one off the top of my head at the moment!





Mackenzie Boos

Due 7/13/23

First time momma

Best parenting advice you've received:

Pick your battles.

What you learned from your mom:

Keep open communication.

What you hope you'll teach your kid:

I hope I teach my child to become a dependable, caring, well rounded adult.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate? Lorelai Gilmore



Marie Patton

Due 7/21/2023 with a BOY!

Mother of one daughter, Quinn, who will turn 2 in June

Best parenting advice you've received:

They live in your house, but they do not run the show. You are the parent.

What you learned from your mom:

Giving back is important. Be kind. Help people without expecting anything in return. Always do your best.

What you hope you'll teach your kids:

The same thing my mother taught me...Giving back is important. Be kind. Help people without expecting anything in return. Always do your best.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to

imitate? Rebecca Pearson from This Is Us, or of course, Carol Brady.





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Keirsta Ragels, C.N.M.



Cassie Applegate, C.N.M.

Megan Michaela Winter

Due April 14th, 2023

First time momma - this is our Rainbow Baby

Best parenting advice you've received:

That children do not need perfection. Being present, understanding and growing with them is all they need. Motherhood is not easy, but it is okay to ask for help.

What you learned from your mom:

It is okay to break generational cycles. Each generation of parenting is different and comes with unique challenges.

What you hope you'll teach your kid:

The importance of taking risks, connecting with others, and being authentically themselves.

What TV/Movie mom would you like to imitate:

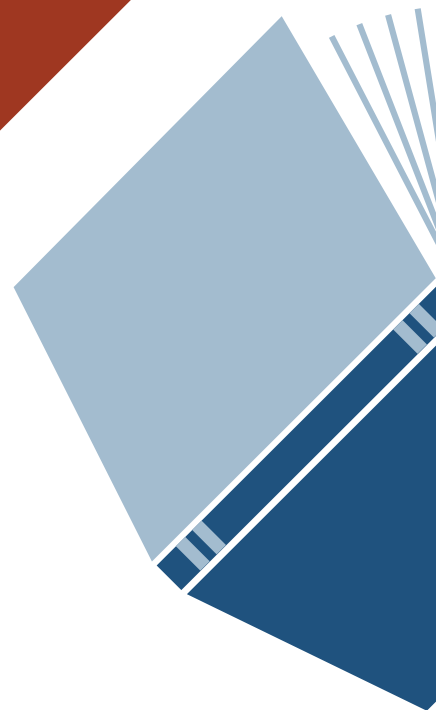
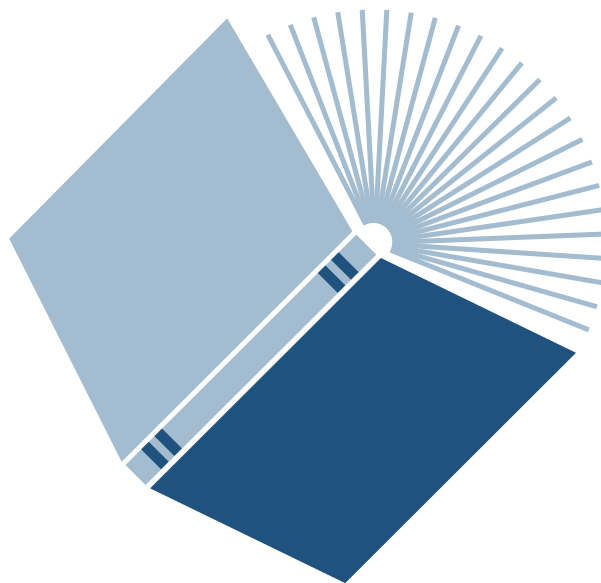
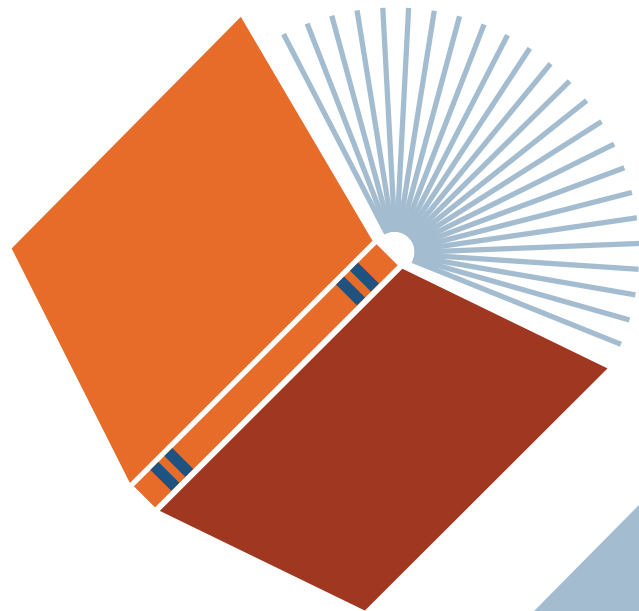
Kyle Richards – The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. As a wife & mother of four she is a working mom, stays physically active, is a style icon, socialite, etc. She's a supportive mother that wears a dozen hats all while staying true to herself and maintaining a sense of who she is.



A Place for Everyone

The Rapid City Public Library

By Kari Nielsen





Laurinda Tapper has always loved libraries, and the Rapid City Public Library was no exception. Now having served as the library's Public Relations Coordinator for the past 10 years, Laurinda is passionate about sharing that love with others.

"We're a community gathering place," Laurinda said. "Every individual using the library has different needs which is why libraries are growing, not just in how many people are using them but also in the types of services that are offered. Libraries are a hub of learning, technology, and accessibility."

Libraries are synonymous with the sharing of books. But that is just where the access to information begins.

The Rapid City Public Library provides people with the ability to use particular types of technology for personal and educational purposes, as well as their own small businesses, through the library's Makerspace. There are 3D printers available with different types of filament, Adobe Creative Suite for editing photos, videos, and graphic design, as well as, a new vinyl printer that prints stickers and cuts vinyl clings for windows. Makerspace also houses a sewing machine, and supplies for other fiber arts, such as knitting and crocheting.

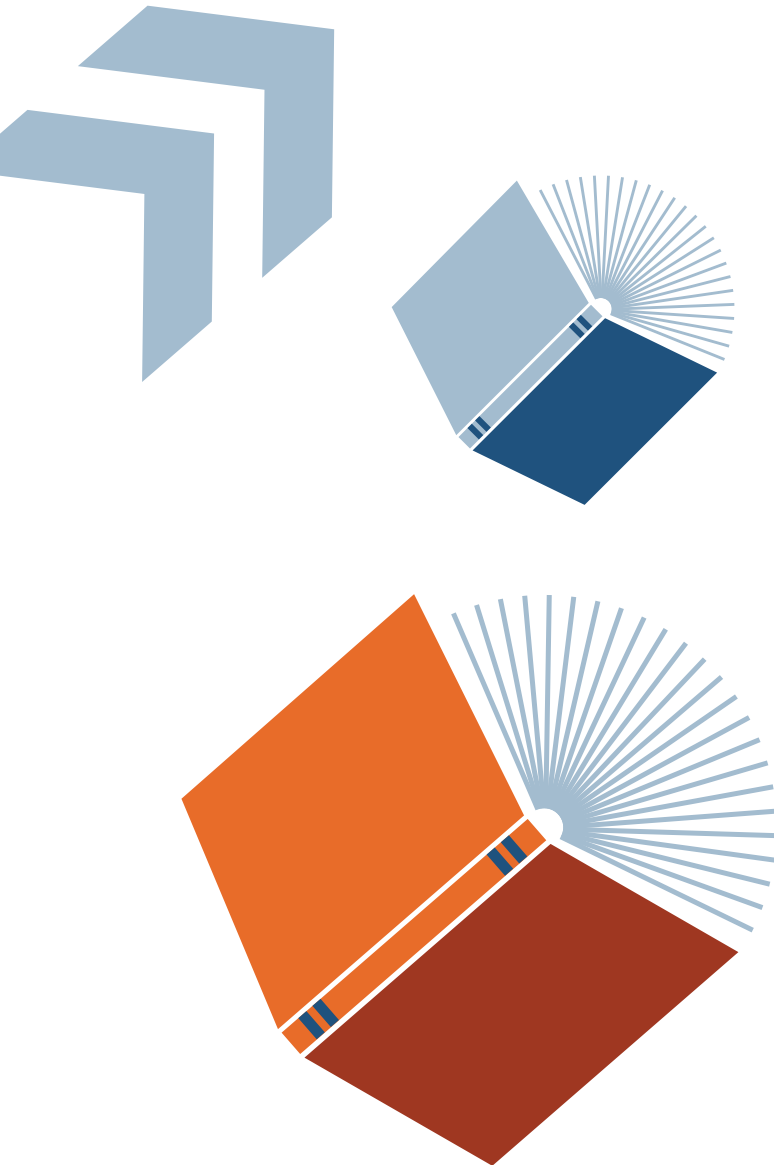
Laurinda mentioned that later this year the library will also have a laser engraver available to create amazing wood and acrylic custom projects.



Laurinda Tapper
Public Relations Coordinator
Photo Credit: Legacy Photo & Design



We're a community gathering place, every individual using the library has different needs which is why libraries are growing, not just in how many people are using them but also in the types of services that are offered.



"There's this misconception that libraries are obsolete in the age of the internet," Laurinda said. "But they aren't, because more and more people are using them. Libraries are educational institutions providing services to learners of all ages."

From early childhood to adult, there is something for everyone.

"Early education and literacy is a priority for us," Laurinda said. "We offer different STEAM-themed hands on events, scheduled story times, and initiatives like 1000 Books Before Kindergarten to help preschoolers prepare for starting school."

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Incorporating this type of learning is also available for school aged kids, in addition to, creative writing workshops. Children are also able to practice their literacy skills twice a month with a certified therapy dog. Teens are able to serve on a Teen Advisory Board to impact what they want to see at the library, as well as, events specific to their interests. Adults can take advantage of concerts, lecture series, yoga classes, Sit And Stitch Knitting Club, Library Dice Legion, and a book club called Chapter Chat.

The Library also provides a unique opportunity to explore the outdoors through a partnership between the South Dakota State Library and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks.

"You can check out a South Dakota Park Pass," Laurinda said. "You just need your library card. It's good for three

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days and you receive a car hang tag for park entry."

The library also provides no-cost notary services and faxing, in addition to, the ability to check out Wi-Fi hotspots, tool kits, board games, and puzzle collections.

"We offer mobile printing," Laurinda said. "You can print documents from your home computer or phone and pick them up at the library. We also have a drive-thru for picking up prints and materials."

The list goes on. But above all Laurinda hopes that people understand the value the library adds to the community.



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"We help people who have questions sift through all the information out there and provide answers from verified sources," Laurinda said. "We house technology for people to use, some of which provides a way for households without Wi-Fi or computers to pay bills, apply for jobs, do school work, and stay in touch with family. We are a gathering place for people to study and hold meetings."

In 2024, the library will also provide a bookmobile that will bring library materials and services to people all over the community. Laurinda says that this will be a great way to meet people where they're at and remove barriers to accessing library services.

"Consider what libraries are known for - the sharing of books," Laurinda said. "This provides communities access to education and literacy, helping expand our understanding of the world."

All that is needed to explore these resources is a library card, obtained by providing a photo ID and proof of residency in Pennington County, such as a utility bill. And if simply using the library isn't enough, find a way to get involved.

The Friends of the Library is an organization that supports the library by selling book donations that aren't added to the library collection. Those proceeds are used to supplement library events, staff education, and projects like the Summer Reading initiative. Donate books or volunteer to help sort donations. Volunteers are also needed to put back books and deliver library materials through the home delivery service. Financial contributions are also appreciated to the Rapid City Public Library Foundation, which through donations, are able to purchase things like the bookmobile.

The library is an essential part of the community. An individual only needs to choose how to be a part of it.

"When I'm out in the community talking about the library, I often hear from people that they haven't been to the library since they were a kid or since their kids were young," Laurinda said. "I'd encourage anyone who hasn't been in years to visit. Libraries have so much more than books, and they offer something for everyone."

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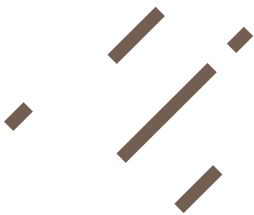
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Be Our Guest

*An Inside Glance to the Hospitality and Care at
Black Hills Surgical Hospital*

By Sarah Grassel





Black Hills Surgical Hospital (BHSB) has been awarded time and time again, and it all comes back to the quality of care and attention they give to each and every single one of the patients they serve. The hospital currently holds the 2023 Medical Excellence Award for being the number one hospital in the nation for Major Orthopedic Care.

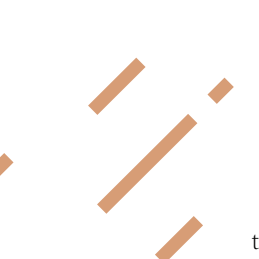
Proudly owned by physicians, BHSB has a series of specialties providing a variety of services for the community. Compared to a five-star hotel resort-like experience, the staff is compassionate, skilled, and offers a wide range of care from head to toe, neurology to podiatry, and everything in between.

The hospital has also been recognized as the top 45 in the nation for quietest hospitals, patient recommended, and top 50 for best patient-rated, medication explanation, and fastest patient aid or assistance.

Doctor Mary Snyder is a plastic surgeon at the hospital and is also a member of the BHSB operations committee.

“I’ve worked at several different hospitals during my career prior to arriving in Rapid City, and there is no other facility in which absolutely everyone is





treated with the respect that they deserve," she said. "The patients are treated like they are guests, not just showing up on the doorstep. It's an entirely different feel in this facility than any other place in the country."

The hospital was founded just over 25 years ago and started off as a small surgical center with only four rooms. Today it has grown into a full service clinic with 11 operating rooms, 26 recovery care suites, a pain clinic, three urgent care locations across the region, and a sports medicine program. It also serves as one of the top largest employers in the region with more than 500 employees.

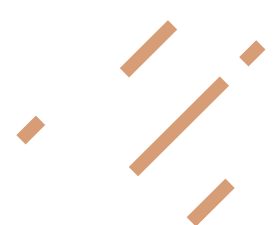
Orthopedic surgeon, Doctor Peg Chilvers, explains that it is because of the talent and dedication of the staff that the hospital stands apart from others. She proudly states, "We're the number one hospital in the nation for major orthopedic surgery from knees and hips to spine, shoulders, elbows, and more."

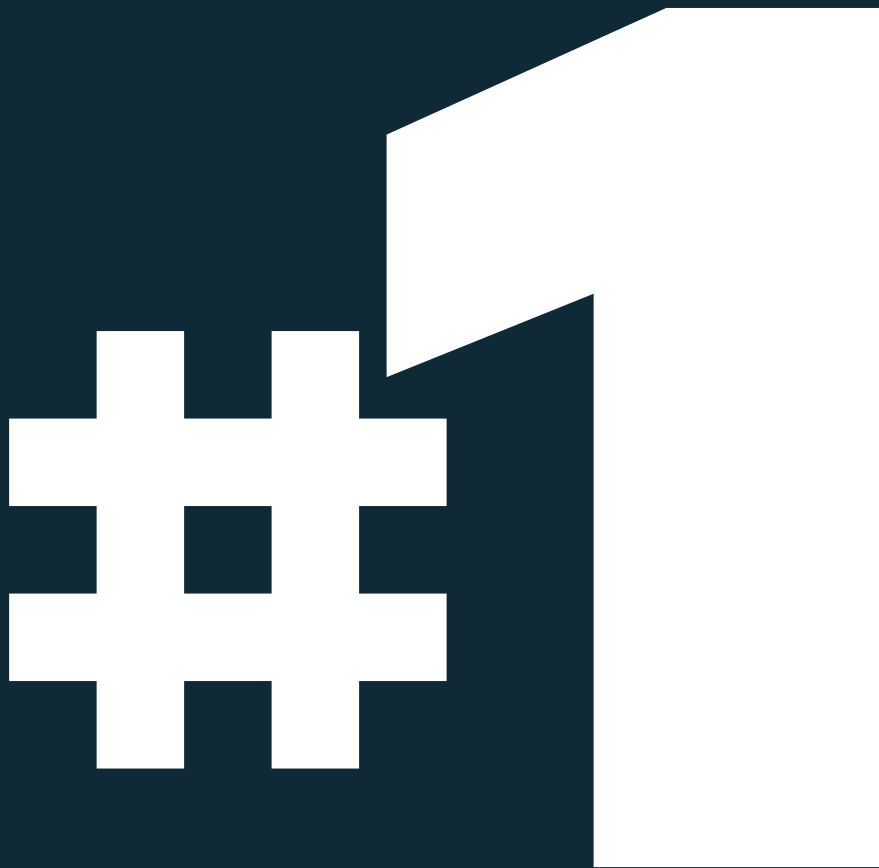
Dr. Snyder adds that while the hospital is an absolute asset to the Black Hills communities, it also attracts patients from around the nation. "We care for patients from all over. People travel here just for the care we provide. We've had people travel from Alaska, Washington, and New Mexico. People want the best care and they deserve the best care and we offer that."

Each of the providers specializes in their particular service. Dr. Snyder credits each specialty as a "true passion" fostered by education at the highest level to develop top-notch skills that contribute to a superior standard of care for each patient that steps into their facility.

On the local level, BHSH is involved outside of the hospital area as well. According to Dr. Chilvers, providers care for athletes at schools in Sturgis, Rapid City, and Box Elder. "We're at hundreds of athletic events each year as a service to the community," she says.

Chancey Krantz has nearly 10 years in the healthcare industry, is a registered nurse, and serves as the surgical services manager. She adds that not only are they serving the community by providing quality patient care but also by helping people regain a quality of life they were lacking. "We're modeling compassion and caring for others." [BHW](#)





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I've been feeling a little inadequate ever since I overheard a conversation between two big dreamers in a restaurant recently. I wasn't trying to eavesdrop. It's not my fault people talk so loudly—and about such interesting things. Anyway, they were discussing their bucket lists which among other things, included getting a pilot's license, living abroad, and running a marathon in every state. One of the women said that just once before she dies, she'd like to pet a whale.

Just once before I die, I'd like to get my checkbook to balance on the first try, so you can see why I'm feeling inadequate.

Clearly, I need bigger goals. But before I go any further, let's make sure we're on the same page—or in the same bucket. A bucket list refers to the activities you want to accomplish before you die—or kick the bucket. And frankly I've never liked the term. Elegant people don't kick the bucket. They go to their eternal rest. Or pass beyond the veil. Or enter the pearly gates. I'm not elegant, but I'd still prefer something classier than bucket list. Maybe pearl pail, but I don't see that catching on.

Since it was popularized after the 2007 movie *The Bucket List*, bucket lists have become as common as to-do lists and probably equally as likely to be completed.

When I typed "bucket list ideas" into my search bar there were more than six billion results. There were exactly none for pearl pail. There are health bucket lists, mental bucket lists, foodie bucket lists, fitness bucket lists, and even ridiculous bucket lists. I'm not making that up. The Ridiculous Bucket List has among its many swell ideas: sleep in a coffin all night, bring a fishing pole to an aquarium, and hire two private investigators to follow each other.

Kicking the Bucket List

By Dorothy Rosby



I'll pass on all those, but there are so many other suggestions that I need some criteria to narrow them down. First off, while I do want to have some once-in-a-lifetime experiences, I don't want them to be once in a lifetime because I don't survive them the first time. That eliminates running with the bulls in Pamplona, high wiring and cliff jumping, which is exactly what it sounds like—jumping off a cliff. For fun. Incidentally when you do the jumping without equipment, it's called tombstoning which should tell you something.

My dreams also have to fit my budget. That leaves out space travel which runs anywhere from \$125,000 to a couple of million. Unless you're a gazillionaire—or an astronaut—a trip to space wouldn't leave much for other goals. Or food, clothing, and shelter. An around-the-world cruise can run up to \$100,000 per person which is somewhat more affordable, affordable being a relative term.

Also out of my price range but less expensive still is attending the Super Bowl. This year prices ranged from just under \$5,000 to around \$36,000. That would be a waste of money for me because I don't even like football. But I'm proud to say I did attend game five of the 1987 World Series. Baseball is more my style with its long periods of monotony interrupted by occasional bursts of hysteria—much like life.

Also it's cheaper and if I'm going to spend \$36,000 on a bucket list item, I should at least enjoy it. That leaves out smoking Cuban cigars in Cuba (I don't smoke), publishing a science fiction novel (I don't even read science fiction) and hunting and bagging an alligator (I don't hunt. Also I'm afraid of alligators.)

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A challenge is good, but I want my goals to be realistic. That eliminates playing in the NBA, climbing Mount Everest, and learning to do the splits.

Finally, I won't be putting anything embarrassing on my list. You'd be surprised how many people include skinny dipping on their bucket lists. I've never skinny dipped, but if I had I wouldn't tell you anyway.

But in my research, I discovered that I've actually accomplished a lot of common bucket list items. I've seen Old Faithful, Niagara Falls, and the Grand Canyon. Oh yes, and Mount Rushmore—several times.

I've gone rappelling, ridden in a hot air balloon, and been in a parade. I was the last chair clarinetist marching with my high school band and it was as embarrassing as skinny dipping would be for me—and probably for the band director too.

Realizing I've done things other people want to accomplish has encouraged me to dream bigger. There are so many more trips I want to take and so many other adventures I'd like to have. And just once before I die, I'd still like to balance my checkbook on the first try.

(Get in touch with Dorothy Rosby if helping someone else balance their checkbook is on your bucket list.) BHW

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Get to Know the Candidates in the Upcoming Mayoral Election



**Jason
Salamun**



**Ron
Weifenbach**



**Laura
Armstrong**



**Josh
Lyle**



**Brad
Estes**

Five candidates have thrown their name into the ring to be named the next Mayor of Rapid City – Jason Salamun, Ron Weifenbach, Laura Armstrong, Josh Lyle and Brad Estes. As Rapid City finds itself in the top 8% of fastest-growing metro areas in the nation and #1 in the Midwest according to the US Census Bureau, our new Mayor will face unprecedented challenges. Nonetheless, each candidate feels prepared for the role.

Are you prepared to cast your vote on Tuesday, June 6? Voting in local elections is a powerful way to make an impact on our local community. We reached out to each candidate, asking them the same questions so that you can get to know each candidate. Here's how they answered.

Imagine it's one of those gorgeous sunshiny days in May, and somehow your calendar is empty. How and where do you spend your ideal day?



Jason Salamun: As our children have grown older, it's a rare treat to get us all together. Nothing would make me happier than all of us spending a beautiful day on a boat at a lake in the Hills. Later, I'd take my wife on a date to a favorite restaurant, perhaps catch a live performance, and cap off the day around a campfire. That would be my ideal day.

Ron Weifenbach: I would enjoy the day with a hike up M hill accompanied by my wife and dog, Xander. After the hike we would stop downtown for a cup of coffee and a pastry. We would then spend the remainder of the afternoon driving through the Black Hills.

Laura Armstrong: I would start the day hiking in the hills with my family and the dogs. Then, I'd fit in some paddle boarding with friends and eat at a couple of different food trucks. I'd relax afterward with a good book in a hammock for a few hours, make some dinner at home (I cook; Scott does the dishes), and go for a sunset stroll – tiramisu or pie for dessert, maybe a little piece of each.

Josh Lyle: I'd start my motorcycle and ride up to Johnson Siding to see if my buddy wanted to pull his boat out to go fishing at Lake Pactola. Then I would set a tee time at Red Rocks golf course and try to re-live the time I eagled hole 2, par 5.

Brad Estes: Easy answer! My wife Deb and I love to Mountain bike, and a beautiful spring day is a great opportunity to be outdoors and get the bikes out. Deb and I have a number of favorite single track trails on Hanson - Larsen Memorial Park and in the Northern Hills area.

What is the #1 main concern running through your head about Rapid City that keeps you awake at night?



Jason Salamun: We must prioritize public safety. Rapid City has a strong tradition of supporting our first responders, maintaining law and order, and working together to tackle public safety concerns. That commitment will remain strong under my watch as proven by my track record on the City Council. I have no higher priority than the safety and security of our community and ensuring Rapid City is a safe place to raise a family.

Ron Weifenbach: Rapid City has grown rapidly in the last few years with no end in sight. This has exposed areas of concern for public safety in our community. Hard working people are struggling to get by, the elderly are getting taxed out of their homes, and the school system is being stressed to new levels. City infrastructures are starting to show their age and failures are more frequent.

Laura Armstrong: As a working mother, I've seen how hard it was to manage a full-time job while making sure my daughters had a safe place to go. As a city, we talk about economic development, but we continue to lag behind in access to childcare for the people who work here. While our economy continues to grow, inflation has pushed safe, consistent, childcare out of reach for many Rapid City citizens. We have thousands of potential employees who want to work, stuck at home, when they could be providing much-needed relief to our workforce shortage. As mayor, I will bring together business leaders, childcare providers, and city hall to make sure children have a safe place to go while their parents are at work.

Josh Lyle: A safer downtown, the locals want to enjoy our beautiful historic city. People don't want to be harassed, so the locals spend minimal time downtown which really hurts small business.

Brad Estes: Top of mind is definitely public safety. I am very concerned to read the seemingly endless reports of crime everything from small petty crimes to more violent and aggressive crimes we've seen escalating in recent years. The victims and their families are members of this community who deserve to live in a safe town. I worry about our first responders who are regularly being confronted with dangerous situations. I am also always reminded that the folks committing these crimes probably started out as kids in our community and somehow found their way into this kind of life. We have to keep pushing to find comprehensive solutions to address this from top to bottom.

Secondly, is our water treatment and waste water systems. I want to make sure we have a comprehensive view of this critical infrastructure as we're looking at growth, and take a regional approach across our area and not just a local plan.

How do you plan to add public education, childcare services, and marginalized communities into the equation of Rapid City's exponential growth?



Jason Salamun: While the city government doesn't have authority over public education, childcare, and the vulnerable, it can help to move the city in a positive direction. As Mayor, I will work to ensure spaces around schools, parks, and other public spaces are safe and accessible for everyone. I will continue to support education as it not only prepares the next generation to meet their potential, it also plays a significant role in attracting healthcare and other professionals with families to Rapid City. I will also work to bring key stakeholders together and develop a regional strategic plan to address our opportunities and challenges—and measure our progress using a community-wide dashboard. The strategic plan and dashboard will cover various sectors of our community including public safety, education, housing, quality of life, health and wellness, economic development, government performance, social services, and more. When we can agree on a direction, and measure our health and performance along the way, we can be more effective at tackling our challenges and maximizing our opportunities.

Ron Weifenbach: My plan is to use the mayor's platform as a tool to work with the school district, County and State officials to identify weaknesses and opportunities to help our school system meet and exceed current and future needs and expectations. As the Leader of the community, it is of the utmost importance that the Mayor help identify areas of concern for the city and participate in any means they can to address these needs to help our city. I will work with childcare providers to help identify areas where the city can be of service to aid in delivering childcare services. I would consider looking at most any innovative means to bring quality daycare for working families. I would look at tax incentives and areas where red tape can be removed for quality providers. The key to success in this area is communication with providers in the community. Inflation costs, housing costs and increased taxes have added to the stress of the working class that are just getting by. To address this, I will remove overreaching regulations and hold the line on new fees and taxes. I will recruit businesses that bring added value to wages and opportunity in our community. All decisions we make involving the city will consider how it will affect the citizens moving forward.

Laura Armstrong: I have maintained many connections with our local schools since I worked for our local school district. It's important to support our schools for the sake of our entire community. As mayor, I'll work with stakeholders to connect our city's resources to promote healthy development for our children and families. If we can provide affordable, reliable childcare, we can help provide support, identify mental and physical needs, and provide early intervention resources before kids fall behind in our classrooms. By doing that, we can set children up to succeed academically and help grow productive members of our community.

Josh Lyle: I found a program that we can get accessible to grant money for single mothers to help subsidize childcare so going to work is not such a financial burden.

Also build programs for the "marginalized communities" to get back on their feet and start being apart of the community again. Our education system has degraded. I will personally sit through every class K-12th so I know what curriculum they are teaching our children. I will reform the educational system to the way it was in the 90's, if need be. Pledge of Allegiance in the AM, followed by Math, English, History, and Social Studies and some electives. Recess, lunch and sports after school.

Brad Estes: In reality, the Mayor has limited ability to functionally impact these topics because the Rapid City Area Schools are their own entity. However, I believe that tone matters and as Mayor I would be a vocal proponent of having a strong school system and access to educational opportunities for all of our citizens in Rapid City. Quality of educational resources is a key factor for families who are considering relocating to this area for new jobs, and our continued strong economic development. I also believe that access to quality education is a critical thing we can do to help lift families out of poverty and away from crime.

Have you heard of a "whisper brand?" It's what people articulate about you, not to you - good, bad, or otherwise. What do you think is your "whisper brand?"



Jason Salamun: Authenticity. I am straight up with people about who I am and what I believe. I openly share that I'm driven by my values of God, family, country, and Rapid City. Not just with my words, but also with my life choices. Whether or not people agree with me or my values, I believe most would agree I am genuine, real, and authentic.



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Ron Weifenbach: I am whispered as a person who gets things accomplished, a person of high integrity who may sometimes be blunt, a person who likes to know the facts and makes decisions based upon data and facts that are pertinent. People will tell each other the best way to understand him is to have a conversation with him; he will listen to you and your concerns without judgment. The whisperers will say he is compassionate and has a desire to help those who need help. He will hold himself accountable and will do the right thing for the right reason.

Laura Armstrong: People know I'm a fighter. For better or worse, I am authentic, speak my mind, and people always know where I stand on the issues. I surround myself with great people, who are experts in their field, to help make the right decisions. For the past six years, I've been supported by my family, my friends, and my community on the City Council. I think my "whisper brand" starts with them. They've seen me stand up for Rapid City, show up when it matters, and speak out on the issues they care about.

Josh Lyle: People that believe I am the only option, from the standing City Council members. I am not a politician, but a businessman. I have such a unique set of skills growing up as a "ward-of-the-state," and beating the odds. It taught me the systems such as the social services that I was raised in, welfare that my "real" mother depended on, food stamps, and financial aid in college. My "whisper brand" is mysterious.

Brad Estes: I hope people say that I'm someone who listens more than he talks. That I'm true to my word. And that I'm working hard for the things I'm passionate about. I try hard to make sure anyone would feel comfortable approaching me to talk about whatever might be on their minds for this community.

**Fast forward: it's your last day as Mayor, there's a big hurrah, the people rejoice!
What was your grand accomplishment deserving of such accolades?**



Jason Salamun: My grand accomplishment will be that I left Rapid City better than I found it. Safer, more prosperous, welcoming, and still beautiful. There's no doubt the city will grow, but will we grow better or will we grow worse? In my time as Mayor, Rapid City will grow better by optimizing opportunities while keeping what makes us special. On a personal note, I will rejoice greatly when we get a Chick-Fil-A in Rapid City!

Ron Weifenbach: My grand accomplishment would be that the next mayor coming in has a great foundation on which

to launch their tenure. There are solid policies and actual processes in place addressing crime. We are addressing the root causes of the homeless community. We have control of expenses within our city budget and have worked to reduce spending. City hall is addressing the public concerns with vigor and understanding. The elderly has a seat at the table and feel they are important and they are being truly listened to. City employees enjoy their jobs, and the culture of the city is embraced. The mayor’s position is honored and revered as a position that is a true advocate for the citizens of Rapid City and the surrounding community.

Laura Armstrong: I am not taking this job for accolades. We’ve got a big job ahead of us, and we have to focus on the problems we can solve. Public safety, infrastructure, economic development, and affordable housing are my top priorities. If on the last day of my mayorship, each able-bodied person in Rapid City has a good job, a place to send their kids while they’re at it, and a safe home to come back to, I’ll know I’ve done my job well.

Josh Lyle: With my pro-business style I will work with construction companies to cut the red tape and help Rapid City grow into its full potential. Keeping our downtown safe, promoting sporting events, and the Rapid City family culture.

Brad Estes: The last pothole has been filled! Wouldn’t that be an accomplishment?! I want people to know that I fairly represented all the citizens of Rapid City. If I’ve done my job right, the City should keep running just as smoothly because that means we have the right culture, the right tone, and the right people in place to keep everything moving for the citizens and the community.



Vote on Tuesday, June 6th.

Rushmore Athletics Local Gym, World Results

By Kari Nielsen

Rushmore Athletics is Rapid City's first All Star competitive cheerleading gym and the only All Star cheerleading gym on the western side of South Dakota. Jenna Farrar, owner, opened Rushmore Athletics in 2018 after realizing there was a huge need for a youth cheerleading program in town.

"I was a Division 1 Cheerleader for the Wyoming Cowboys from 2008-2012," Jenna said. "After graduation, I returned to Rapid City where I was coaching the School of Mines sideline team and was the head competitive coach at Central High School. At this time, east river had All Star cheer gyms in existence for 20 years and Rapid had nothing."

Not only did Jenna coach after graduation, she also has an impressive athletic history of being a competitive gymnast from the young age of six and leading her cheerleading squad as Captain in her senior year of college. Jenna's vision for Rushmore Athletics grew from her personal and professional passion for both sports.

Rushmore Athletics is unique in that they are the only gym in the area offering cheer in both recreational and competitive form. And what exactly does that mean? For example, all of





the Rapid City high schools offer sideline as well as competitive cheer. High school competitive programs differ from All Star Cheer in that high school cheer programs incorporate a vocal section into the routine, while All Star is strictly music. Sideline programs, on the other hand, are designed specifically to cheer on the team and energize the crowd.

Rushmore Athletics not only offers recreational and competitive options for cheer, they also offer varying programs for every age and level of athlete. From the tots program that teaches 3 and 4 year olds the basics of tumbling and the importance of following directions to recreational cheer and tumbling classes for athletes ages 4-18. These classes focus on tumbling, jumping, and stunting. Competitive cheer is offered in two options, half year cheer which goes October through May with athletes attending three competitions within South Dakota and full year cheer, in which athletes attend 6 competitions in the surrounding states while practicing three days a week for an hour and a half.

"Regardless of the program athletes are enrolled in, we strive to teach kids the importance of dedication and hard work," Jenna said. "I believe the lessons learned in youth cheerleading will benefit kids for the rest of their lives."

It is important to highlight the leaps and bounds Rushmore Athletics program has made this last year. The gym has four full year Elite Level teams, and all four received a bid to attend the All Star World Competition in Orlando, Florida, May 4th-7th.

"We learned choreography for this season back in July," Jenna said. "The athletes work on perfecting their routines for the entire season."

Athletes ranging in ages from 5-19 attend the All Star Worlds. The teams are scored by a panel of judges on difficulty and technique throughout their entire routine. Each competition throughout the year gives out 6 bids for teams to compete at worlds to the teams with the highest score of the day. Rushmore Athletics senior team earned a fully paid bid by receiving the highest score of the whole competition.

"After we found out our teams would be heading to Orlando, we did enlist the help of an outside choreographer to give our routines a few upgrades," Jenna said. "It is very helpful to have a different set of eyes come to the gym and help out."

All Star Cheer combines tumbling, dance, jumps and stunts, into a two and half minute routine. Teams are formed based on tiers for every age and ability level.

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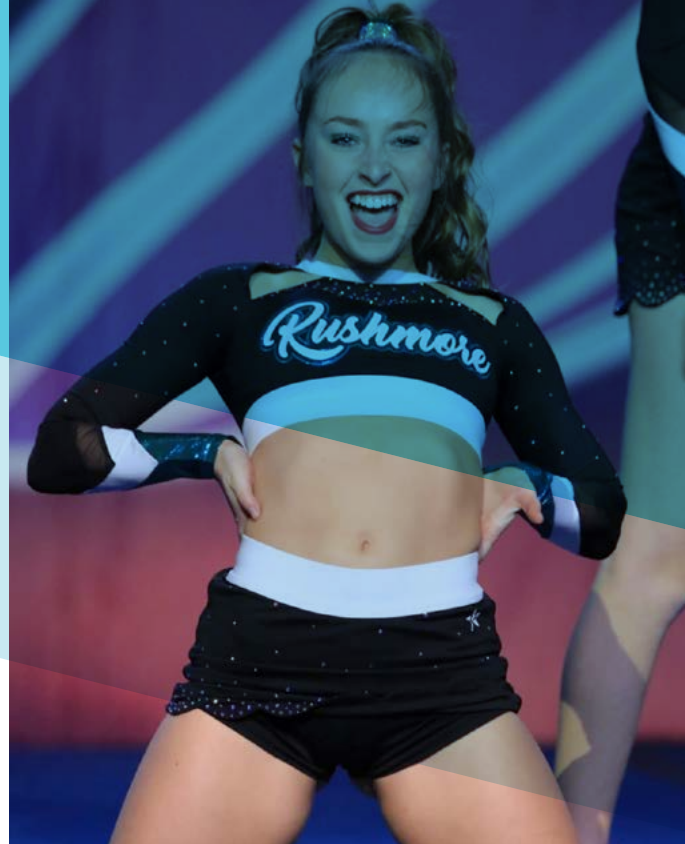
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"I don't think people realize that All Star cheerleading has been around since 1980," Jenna said. "It is a fantastic option for athletes looking to combine gymnastics and dance into a single sport. The athleticism it takes to be a competitive cheerleader is truly amazing and very different than any other sport."

And regardless of whether an athlete falls into the competitive or recreational category, Rushmore Athletics is here to influence every athlete by providing a safe and fun environment. It was created for athletes of all ages and skill levels with the hope of promoting a strong work ethic, sportsmanship, teamwork, and positive attitudes.

Check out more about Rushmore Athletics and the programs they have to offer at their website rushmoreathletics.com Their summer session begins June 5th!
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Suspending a Moment

Artist Alexandra "Peedee" Hansen

By Sarah Grassel



We asked our followers and readers, to send us your favorite artists in the community and among a list of amazing creative women, one kept sticking out - Alexandra "Pedee" Hansen. From the Hills, Alexandra remembers always having a passion for art. Today, she pursues that love full-time in addition to running the Hitching Post Tap House in Belle Fourche with her husband, Slade.



"I remember sitting at the dining room table in an oversized shirt, little feet dangling from the chair and painting," Alexandra reminisces. "Even as a little girl it was my safe space, my getaway."

Overtime, Alexandra continued to work on her craft and develop new skills and techniques to better her art. After high school, she attended Oklahoma State University with the intention of pursuing her art degree while rodeoing. However, she switched paths when pondering a question posed by her advisor, "What do you want to do with your art degree?"

Alexandra explains, "I had never given it much thought. I just knew I wanted to create, to dream and bring ideas to life." The advisor then directed her to two options artists usually take: teaching or graphic design. Not wanting to be stuck behind a desk, Alexandra changed her major to business marketing and took a five-year break from painting.

During that time frame, Alexandra was quite a busy individual. Right out of college, she decided to put her whole heart into the

business marketing she studied and began her own marketing company in Oklahoma. "I learned a lot of great skill sets, but then I ended up moving back to the Hills where I met my husband," she shares.

Shortly after, she created the Blue Spruce Coffee Company with a mobile truck unit as well as a drive through location at exit 8 in Spearfish. Alexandra adds, "As a business owner with no children, it's easy for your business to become your child and be the center of your universe. I quickly became lost in growing, expanding and seeing what I could accomplish next that I stopped taking care of myself and taking time for myself."

All of that changed when the COVID-19 pandemic began. "My whole world stopped in one day," she says. "COVID hit and with it so many emotions that needed to be processed. Thankfully, art was there for me when I needed it most. I poured my heart onto canvas and knew I needed to pursue my true passion once again."

It wasn't long before this new adventure really took off. Art became something that was freeing and peaceful and Alexandra quickly realized that to pursue art she needed to "hit the ground running." She created a small collection of works that sold out after exhibiting them at Spearfish Creek Wine Bar, and at that point, Alexandra knew that she could, and would, make a career out of her artwork.

"I wasn't sure how, but I had the will and the way would be provided through prayer and perseverance. I started entering nationally juried shows, contacting galleries, and my work started gaining momentum," Alexandra proudly shares. "Before I knew it I had people reaching out for custom commissioned work for their homes, had a year wait list for my work and made

it into national shows I had dreamed of being accepted into."

Primarily focused on wildlife and landscapes, her work is a suspension of the moment. Alexandra explains her style, "They are moments of weightlessness and suspension. I marry my love of abstract and realism to evoke an intended emotion for my viewers using my three primary mediums, oil, acrylic and graphite."

A Glance into the Artistic Process

Creating artwork looks a little different for Alexandra. The process varies depending on the end goal. Here's a glance at what it looks like to work with her for commissioned pieces that will permanently reside in a client's home or business.

- *Step one: Client interview. This helps determine if working together is the right fit with style and deadlines. It also ensures understanding of the client's vision.*
- *Step two: Looking at the space and home theme. Alexandra explains, "I look at the space they will be hanging the final piece in as well as the interior design elements the client would like me to tie into the piece."*
- *Step three: Studio studies. A curated color swatch sample is created along with a few small sketches for the client to choose from.*
- *Step four: Creation. The materials are ordered and the project officially begins. Alexandra adds, "Delivery day is my absolute favorite! Most clients opt to not see the piece until the day of delivery, so it's a moment of magic for both of us."*

When creating something for herself, the process is entirely different and can take months or even years from start to finish.

Striking inspiration from outdoor experiences or animals, an idea may sit with Alexandra for months before it makes it to the canvas.

"Once I understand the values, lighting, and composition of the piece on a smaller scale I bring it to life on canvas or panel. I always start with my sketch on the bigger canvas and then I add texture to the piece where I feel it needs the most impact. Then, I begin working with liquid mediums to bring shape and movement to the piece. Stopping about halfway through the liquid values, I change focus to the main subject of the piece because sometimes the idea or mood of the piece changes halfway through. Once I complete the main subject I then finish my liquid backgrounds with more paint, more liquid or graphite - whatever is needed to complete the feel of the piece to complement the focus of the piece," Alexandra elaborates.
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Quick Facts About Alexandra

- Alexandra is a published poet. She was published twice by the American Library of Poetry when she was in high school.
- Alexandra also represented the state of South Dakota at the National High School Finals for barrel racing.
- Cribbage is something she enjoys with anyone willing to play a game!
- Previous owner of the Blue Spruce Coffee Truck, Alexandra was inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame as an innovative entrepreneur. She has since sold the coffee company to pursue art full time.
- Alexandra is an avid pickle-ball player.
- Alongside her husband Slade, Alexandra was awarded "Small Business of the Year" this last March for the business they own and operate together, Hitching Post Tap House, by the Belle Fourche Chamber of Commerce.



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