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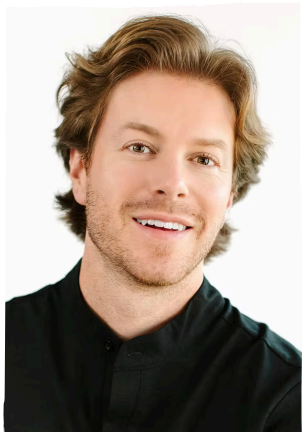
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HOLD YOUR PEOPLE CLOSE

A NOTE FROM CHANTEL

As the busy season settles in, my hope for each of you is simple: slow down enough to enjoy it.

It's so easy to get caught up in the hustle — the lists, the plans, the traditions, and making sure everyone else has a wonderful holiday. We spend so much time thinking about the people we love that we sometimes forget to stop and notice what matters most to us.

So, for just a moment, think about the things you are most grateful for. The people. The places. The traditions. The little moments that make you feel most at home.

Now put those things at the top of your list this season.

Everything else can come after.

Because years from now, we probably won't remember whether everything was perfect. We'll remember who was around the table. The laughter from the other room. The traditions we kept. The conversations that lasted longer than expected. The simple moments we didn't realize would become some of our favorite memories.

Keep it simple. Be present. Hold your people close.

And give yourself the chance to truly enjoy this season, too.

Until next time,
Chantel McDonnell



Art IN EVERY SEASON

BY MADIGAN SCHMITZ

There are places that just feel like home the moment you arrive, even if you've never been before. For Kristie Van Bogart, the Black Hills had that effect from the very beginning.

She hadn't planned on moving to Hill City. She and her husband had spent years imagining a retirement split between Minnesota and Florida. But when their daughter took a summer job at a dude ranch, Kristie found herself standing under a Black Hills sky for the first time as an adult, and something shifted.

"I told my husband, 'I can't really explain it, but I think I belong here,'" she says.

She didn't ignore that feeling. The couple began visiting every season, getting to know the land and its people before making any decisions. When friends they'd met in the Hills gently pointed out that they seemed to be visiting an awful lot, the idea of actually moving started to take shape. Her husband set one condition: if she could find property where they could keep their horses, he'd go.

Eight years later, Kristie Van Bogart is no longer just a Hill City resident. She's one of its most dedicated community builders, serving as president of the Hill City Arts Council.

It's a role she fell into the same way she stumbled into the Hills: organically, through curiosity and a desire to connect. When she first arrived, she knew that getting involved was the fastest way to put



down roots. She began attending council meetings with a friend, and before long she'd been elected to the board, then elected secretary and eventually president.

"I went to a meeting with a couple of ladies I knew," she says, "and next thing I knew, I was elected to the board."

The Hill City Arts Council has been a cornerstone of the community since it incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2002, built by a dedicated group of people with a big vision for what a small town could offer. Today, the organization anchors its year around three signature events, each one a testament to how much thoughtful arts programming can do for a community.

From January through March, the council hosts Live on Stage — two Saturday nights each month featuring musicians and performers at the Chute Rooster. It's an intimate, fundraiser-style event that has evolved considerably over the years, growing from an open-mic format into a curated evening complete with a featured artist and a live auction, with items donated by supporters.

In June, Fine Arts in the Hills takes over Elm Street. The juried fine arts show, which grew out of an earlier sculpture-focused event, isn't a craft fair. Artists apply and are accepted based on the quality of their work, resulting in a showcase that has drawn over 2,200 visitors in a single year.

Then in September comes the Plein Air Paint Out, and it's perhaps the most visually dramatic of the three events. Artists travel from across the region to paint outdoors, rain or shine, across two full days in the Hills. The painted pieces are then showcased and sold at the John Crane Gallery during



"I TOLD MY HUSBAND,
'I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN IT,
but I think I belong here.'"



"WE HAVE A REALLY *incredible quality* OF ARTISTS IN ALL OF OUR EVENTS..."

the event. The weekend culminates in a Quick Draw on Saturday morning: artists paint for two and a half hours, then bring their work to With the Wind — another community partner — where the morning's paintings are auctioned live beneath an awning. It's spontaneous and communal, and it's exactly the kind of event that makes people feel like they're part of something special.

"We have a really incredible quality of artists in all of our events," Kristie says simply. "We're just really fortunate that way."

One of the council's most tangible legacies sits right in front of Jewel of the West: Iron Star, a stunning sculpted horse created by nationally renowned South Dakota artist John Lopez of Lemmon. The council owns it, and Kristie mentions it with obvious pride. Lopez's work appears around the world, but Iron Star belongs to Hill City, serving as a lasting testament to the creativity found in our own backyard.

That, more than anything, seems to be what drives Kristie. Not the logistics or the fundraising or the board meetings, but the moments when an artist finds a new collector, when a musician plays to a packed room on a January night, when someone walks under a tent on Elm Street and discovers a painter they've never heard of and falls in love with the work.

"I've been blessed to meet some amazing people," she says. "The artists, the volunteers — that is a highlight for me."

"I've been blessed to meet some amazing people," she says. "The artists, the volunteers — that is a highlight for me."

When she eventually steps away from the presidency, she hopes to leave behind something simple and lasting: enough passion in enough people to keep going. The art may look different. The events may evolve. That's fine with her because she believes in change.

She just wants Hill City to keep making room for beauty.

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Christmas Nights of Light

AT STORYBOOK ISLAND

BY KELSY PETERSON



Every holiday season, Storybook Island transforms. Thousands of twinkling lights cover the playsets and line the walkways, Christmas music fills the park, and eight and a half acres become a place that feels almost magical. For many Black Hills families, Christmas Nights of Light has become a tradition they wouldn't dream of missing.

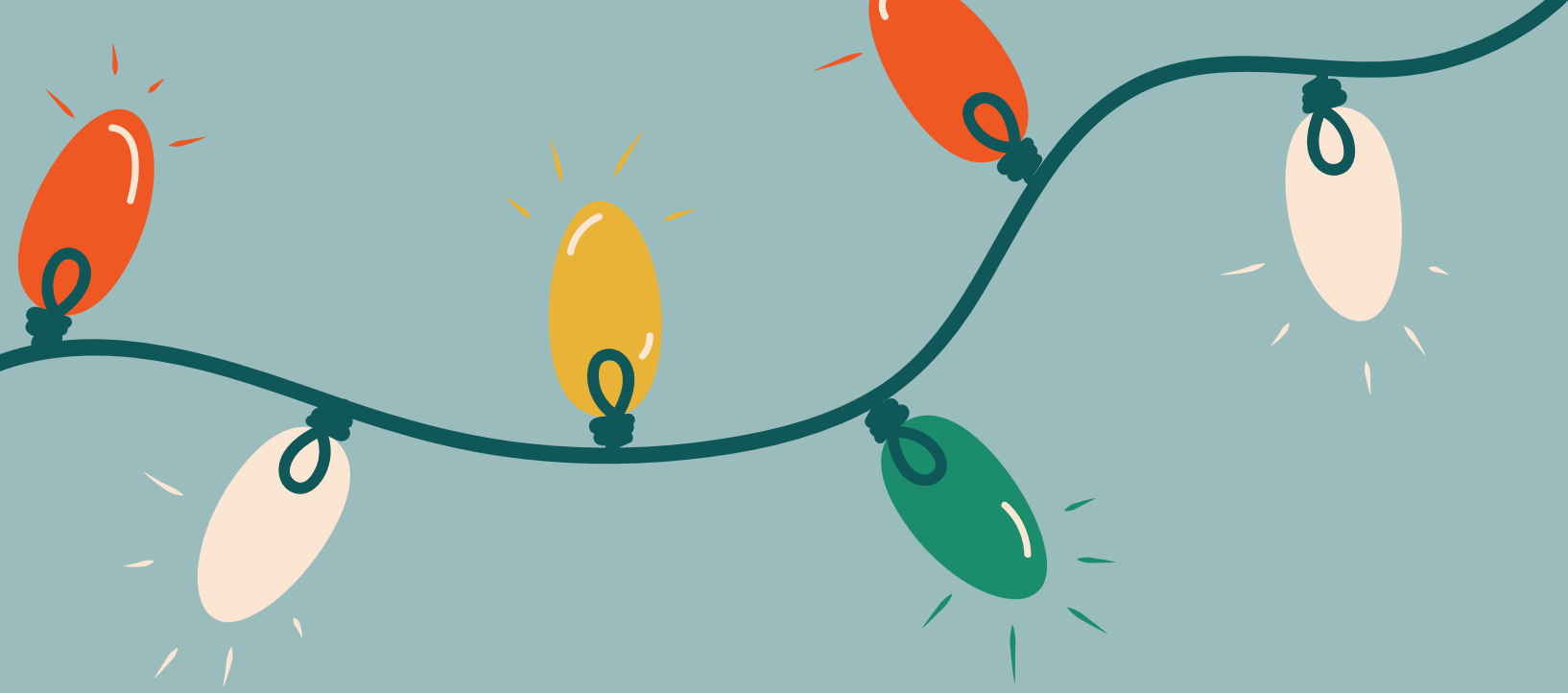
But long before the first family walks through the gates, the work has already begun. Behind the miles of lights, cups of hot chocolate, and holiday memories are months of planning, hundreds of volunteers, and a small team working to bring it all to life. At the center of it is Mallory Hook, executive director of Storybook Island, whose connection to the park began long before it became her job.

Mallory has been with Storybook Island for four years, two and a half as the executive director. Mallory shares that her love for the park started long before her employment. "My cousins lived just down the road from Storybook Island, so we would meet them at the park often. I have a picture of me at my cousin's birthday party from 30 years ago. I remember how magical it was and how it was made for kids, not adults, which made it so fun." To this day, her favorite part of the park is seeing that childlike wonder. "When I need to escape from the office for a minute, I sit on a bench and watch families explore the park and see the kids' faces light up knowing they can run, play, and just be kids. It reminds me that we really need to slow down. Things don't need to be complicated."



"It's so fun to see families year after year enjoying the lights and making it part of their family traditions."

This year will be Mallory's fifth season for the Christmas Nights of Light event, one she looks forward to every year. "It's so fun to see families year after year enjoying the lights and making it part of their family traditions. On the nights when it snows and we turn the lights and the music on for the night, it's like living in a Hallmark movie!"



The event runs from Thanksgiving Weekend to New Year's and takes months of planning and organizing. "Christmas in July is a real thing; we start planning what we need for new lights in July and have them in the park by late August. We have three shipping containers full of lights and decorations. We estimate there are 25 miles of lights, and it keeps growing each year."

What's even more impressive than 25 miles of lights? That 95% of them are hung by the two-man maintenance team. "Our resident 'lighting expert' Peter starts hanging lights the week after our closing day. From September to the end of November, Peter and Walt hang lights and decorate, taking advantage of our fall days before it gets too cold. Some years they keep decorating even after we have started our event." Mallory shares that these two have the whole process down to a science.

Another key part of making the event successful is the team of volunteers. Throughout the Christmas Nights of Light season, volunteers help keep everything running, from the train and carousel to the hot chocolate stand. Coordinating enough people to staff each night is no small task — and it's an effort Mallory and her coworker, Alyssa, begin organizing in September.

What goes up must also come down, and so too must the Christmas lights around Storybook Island. Mallory and her team aren't done once the event ends. "After our last night, we come in the next day, clean up, make sure everything is turned off, and then we take a long winter's nap, as we work every weekend from Thanksgiving to









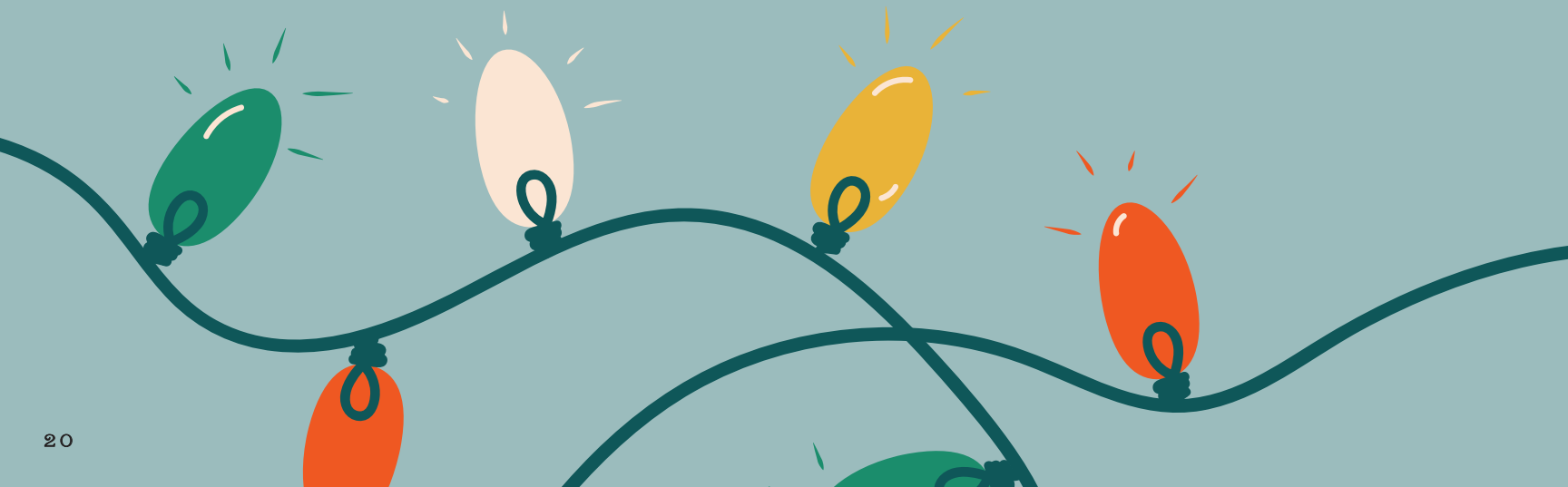
New Year's and almost every day in between!" Once the weather is nice enough, they start the process of taking down all the lights. Some years this takes place in January; other years, it can take a few months for the weather to cooperate. "They come down much faster than they go up. We organize them in totes and store them away for next year. All in all, it's a seven-month process."

This year marks the 32nd season of Christmas Nights of Light at Storybook Island. "The first Christmas Nights of Light started in 1995. It was the idea of a few Rotary members who had seen a similar event in another state and wanted to try it."

After 30 years, this event has become a holiday tradition for countless families in the Black Hills area, while also drawing visitors from out of state. Mallory shares some of the numbers that show just how much the event has grown. "We have around 30,000 visitors each season. On average, we sell 6,000 hot chocolates. We order 80 dozen cookies and give 10,000 train and carousel rides. We even see lots of engagements each year. In total we have around 270 volunteers, equaling about 945 volunteer hours in 18 nights."

It's easy to be awed by the dazzling display that transforms Storybook Island during the holiday season, but after getting a glimpse behind the scenes at all the coordination and hard work needed to make the event happen, it seems to shine a little brighter. All proceeds from the event help keep Storybook Island free and open to the public during the summer season. Every train ride and cup of hot chocolate helps another child experience the magic of this beloved park.

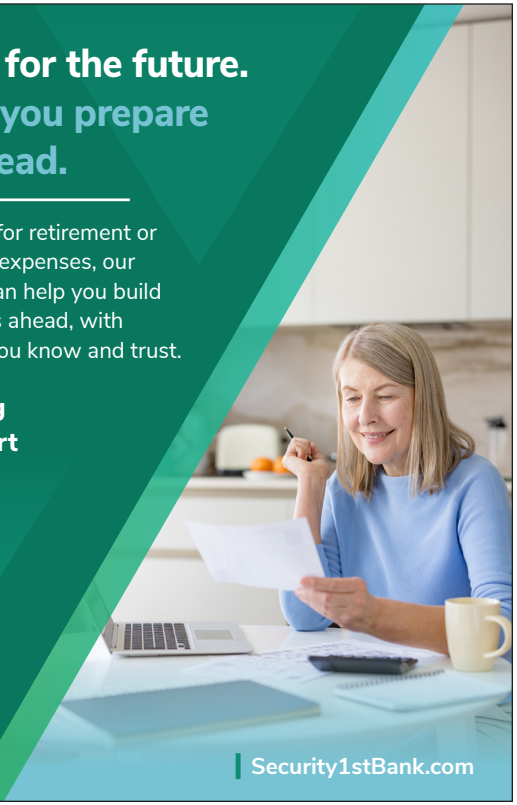
Storybook Island's Christmas Nights of Light opens November 27 and continues on select evenings throughout December. Visit storybookisland.org for the complete schedule and event details.



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- Income Statements: W-2s, 1099s, 1098s
- Deduction & Credit Info: Charitable donation receipts, childcare receipts, education expenses
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- Other Docs: Last year's tax return, IRS notices/letters, foreign tax forms

This is a general guideline. Specific documents will vary based individual circumstances.

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Merry Christmas

BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT



In the rush of early morning,
When the red burns through the gray,
And the wintry world lies waiting
For the glory of the day,
Then we hear a fitful rustling
Just without upon the stair,
See two small white phantoms coming,
Catch the gleam of sunny hair.

Are they Christmas fairies stealing
Rows of little socks to fill?
Are they angels floating hither
With their message of good-will?
What sweet spell are these elves weaving,
As like larks they chirp and sing?
Are these palms of peace from heaven
That these lovely spirits bring?

Rosy feet upon the threshold,
Eager faces peeping through,
With the first red ray of sunshine,
Chanting cherubs come in view:
Mistletoe and gleaming holly,
Symbols of a blessed day,
In their chubby hands they carry,
Streaming all along the way.

Well we know them, never weary
Of this innocent surprise;
Waiting, watching, listening always
With full hearts and tender eyes,
While our little household angels,
White and golden in the sun,
Greet us with the sweet old welcome, —
"Merry Christmas, every one!"


THE
CLUB
FOR
BOYS

THE HEART BEHIND THE WORK

STORY BY BREY FUHRMANN

For Carri Redmond, giving comes naturally. For the past 36 years, she has dedicated her time and heart to the young boys in our community. Throughout her career, Carri has shown up in countless ways, leading and supporting generations of members at the Club for Boys of Rapid City.

CALLED TO LEAD

Carri began her career in the nutrition program, where she connected with a mentor who guided her toward a life of giving and encouraged her to take on new roles within the Club. From nutrition, Carri moved into developing programs for 6- to 9-year-olds before eventually co-managing the thrift store. She later planned and hosted events, became program director and ultimately stepped into her current role as club director.

When asked what her favorite role within the Club was, she couldn't choose just one. Instead, she shared heartfelt memories and what she loved about each hat she has worn. "The best job has been serving others."

Even during times when life steered her in new directions, Carri always managed to find her way back to the Club. "It is the most fun thing I've ever done. I've left a couple of times and luckily there was always something to come back to. I've realized there





is nothing better. The people I work with are amazing — the families, the boys — there is really nothing better."

For Carri, her job title has never mattered as much as the relationships she has built and the impact she has had on Club members along the way.

FOR EVERY GENERATION

From her very first day, Carri has poured her heart into the boys at the Club and the people she's worked alongside. Her leadership can be seen in the way she guides her staff, welcomes new members, and greets former members who now return with families of their own. Relationships built early in her career remain strong today. Through it all, Carri has continued to show up for Club members.

With more than 900 members, remembering every name is no small task. Carri works hard to get to know as many boys as she can, making sure each one feels valued and important. For some kids, simply feeling seen and welcomed at the Club can be life-changing. "It's hard to see in the moment, even day to day, that you

"THE BEST JOB HAS BEEN SERVING OTHERS."

make a difference. The great thing about this job is when kids join, I can say that I knew their dad. I regularly run into them in the community, and I love that. As adults, they look back and they share their stories with me, and I realize that I did make a difference."

HEART IN SERVICE

When asked what drives her commitment to her work, she responded that she simply wants to serve others. "I never really thought of myself as a community leader. I just thought I was doing my job. There was no training plan when I first started — you learn as you go. My heart is with our kids and families. My heart has also grown to include our staff — I love to support and develop them even if it means they leave to go on and do other things."

Giving back has always been at the center of Carri's work. Whether that means giving her time, talent, or treasure, she believes in using what she has to serve others. Carri describes her job as "God's work," and it is clear she feels she was meant to be at the Club. "In the last five years, my faith has grown, and I can look back and see that was a turning point. I can say that this is God's work, and we are put on this earth to serve others. For me, this is the best place to serve people every day. Our kids, their families, my staff, the volunteers, everyone."



"I'VE REALIZED THERE IS NOTHING BETTER. THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH ARE AMAZING – THE FAMILIES, THE BOYS – THERE IS REALLY NOTHING BETTER."

Carri's impact can be felt throughout the community, but even after 36 years, she says the boys have taught her just as much as she has taught them. "I try to teach the boys, but in reality, they are teaching me compassion and empathy. A lot of the situations we deal with aren't things I dealt with as a child. I've learned to be compassionate and show empathy for all kinds of people because you don't know what they are walking through each day."

For Carri, it has always been about serving others. Whether it's the boys, their families, her staff, or the community she's spent decades serving, she continues to lead the same way she always has — with an open heart and a willingness to show up.



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November

Black Hills Chili Bowl

RAPID CITY | NOVEMBER 15

Nothing pairs better with the cooler weather of the season than a piping hot bowl of savory chili. The Black Hills Chili Bowl gives businesses and home cooks the opportunity to compete for the title of Chili Bowl Champion of the Black Hills. Participants can taste their way through a variety of chili creations and vote for their favorites.

Storybook Island Christmas Nights of Light

RAPID CITY | NOVEMBER 27

Rapid City's favorite summer park turns into a winter wonderland during the holiday season. Bundle up and enjoy an evening strolling through the familiar walkways, now lined with miles and miles of Christmas lights. The event opens November 27 and continues on select nights in December.

Kris Kringle Craft and Vendor Fair

HILL CITY | NOVEMBER 27–28

Two days of holiday shopping are waiting for you at the Kris Kringle Craft and Vendor Fair in Hill City! Shop from a selection of local vendors and find handmade treasures to check names off your holiday shopping list.

Festival of Lights Parade

RAPID CITY | NOVEMBER 28

Heat up the hot chocolate and grab your warmest winter coat for a festive evening at the Festival of Lights Parade in Rapid City. As the streetlights dim, enjoy float after float filled with lights and Christmas cheer as they parade through the streets of Downtown Rapid City. Arrive early to find parking and a good spot to set up your chairs.

Winter Market

RAPID CITY | NOVEMBER 28

Local vendors line the streets surrounding the ice rink at Main Street Square during Winter Market. Browse a large selection of local goods, catch the ice skating shows on the rink, and enjoy the merriment of Downtown Rapid City during the holiday season.

EDIT

BY KELSY PETERSON

From holiday gift shopping and hot chili to Christmas lights and jingles, these local events bring plenty of cheer to the season. Grab a hot chocolate, bundle up, and join the fun!

December

Blue Violin's Retro Rock & Roll Christmas

RAPID CITY | DECEMBER 1

This electrifying 90-minute concert blends your favorite holiday songs with iconic '80s rock hits from artists like Bon Jovi and Michael Jackson. Spend the night singing and dancing along for a memorable holiday experience.

NUTCRACKER! Magical Christmas Ballet

RAPID CITY | DECEMBER 1

Catch the breathtaking spectacle of the NUTCRACKER! Magical Christmas Ballet at The Monument in Rapid City. This holiday performance features world-class international dancers, acrobatics, spectacular puppets, and costumes.

Winter Wonderland

BOX ELDER | DECEMBER 10

Join the holiday fun during Winter Wonderland at The Box in Box Elder. Enjoy free photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a holiday selfie station, holiday crafts, a face-painting booth, cotton candy from Sweet Fluff, and more! You can also tour the Parade of Trees at The Box (open Dec. 1–26) and vote for your favorite decorated Christmas tree.

Kringle Crawl Weekend

DEADWOOD | DECEMBER 11–12

The Kringle Crawl is back for another fun weekend in Deadwood! This two-day event includes a legendary Deadwood pub crawl, shopping, and some holiday fun inspired by Kris Kringle.

New Year's Eve at the Hotel Alex Johnson

RAPID CITY | DECEMBER 31

Ring in the New Year at one of the biggest celebrations in town. Start the night with dancing, beverages, and prizes in the Hotel Alex Johnson ballroom before making your way outside to 6th Street to count down as the ball drops at midnight.

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To My *Grandma,*

You have always made moments special.

I'm seven years old, lying on your bed after school and watching reruns of *I Love Lucy*. The afternoon wouldn't be complete without a snack. I remember thinking the apples at your house, always with the peel cut off, just tasted better. Now that I'm older, I know you bought a different variety. But at the time, I thought it was "Grandma Magic."

That magic found its way into everything we did together: playing cards, sewing quilts and dresses, and following the elaborate treasure hunts you created, where every clue rhymed and led to a surprise. But I remember the magic most in your kitchen. You patiently invited me to help you make things, whether it was homemade potato dumplings for Thanksgiving, because Grandpa and I had to have them, or pinwheels for Christmas. You taught me what a gift it is to cook and bake for others.

During this season of gathering, I find myself thinking about all the holidays we spent around your kitchen table. Now that I have a family of my own, I appreciate how much work and care went into those meals. They truly were a labor of love. Thank you for letting me learn by your side. You gave me a love of cooking and baking and showed me why making something from scratch can mean so much.

I know you've never bought a frozen pie crust in your life. I know that cooking for family is about more than the food on the table. The real gift is in the conversations we have while making and sharing it. I treasure the talks we've had, the wisdom you've passed down, and the stories you've told. We've made so much together, but what I treasure most is the relationship we've built.

I am a better person because you've sprinkled your magic throughout my life for the past 37 years. It is a blessing to be your granddaughter, and I am so lucky to call you Grandma.

Love, Kari

FROM MY GRANDMA'S

Recipe Box to Yours

My grandma recently gave me a box of recipes, all in her handwriting. I'm so grateful to have them, and it means a lot to share four of them with you. I hope they bring a little of the warmth I've always felt around her table to yours this holiday season.









Potato Dumplings

13 ~~16~~ potatoes cooked or 10 cups potatoes
2 tsp salt
6 cups flour

I cook the potatoes with the peelings on. When cool remove peelings. Mash with hand potato masher — not electric mixer. They will be lumpy — not smooth like regular mashed potatoes. Work flour into potatoes

Potato Dumplings

INGREDIENTS

13 cooked potatoes,
or 10 cups potatoes

2 teaspoons salt

6 cups flour

DIRECTIONS

1. I cook the potatoes with the peelings on. When cool, remove peelings.
   Mash with hand potato masher — not electric mixer.
   They will be lumpy — not smooth like regular mashed potatoes.
2. Work flour into potatoes 1 cup at a time with your hands. Add salt.
   Make mixture crumbly. When flour is mixed in, make into 12 or 13 large balls.
3. Have a large kettle of boiling water. Drop one dumpling in;
   boil for a few minutes — it should hold its shape.
4. Drop remaining dumplings into boiling water.
   Bring to boil, turn on low and simmer for 1 hour.
5. Remove dumplings and enjoy (with gravy)!

Cranberry Salad

THIS MAKES A LARGE SALAD AND WILL KEEP FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb cranberries, ground

1 cup sugar

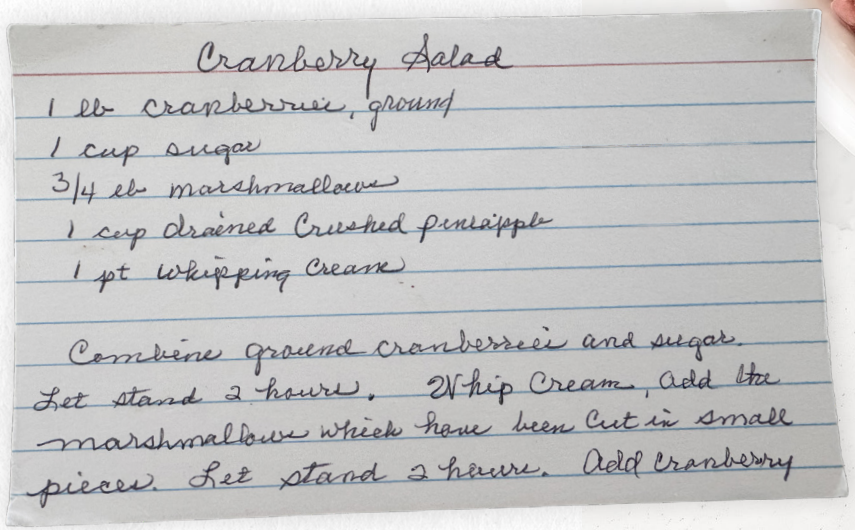
¾ lb marshmallows

1 cup drained crushed pineapple

1 pint whipping cream

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine ground cranberries and sugar. Let stand 2 hours.
2. Whip cream. Add the marshmallows which have been cut in small pieces. Let stand 2 hours.
3. Add cranberry mixture and pineapple to whipped cream. Pour into mold. Let stand in refrigerator overnight.


Cranberry Salad
1 lb cranberries, ground
1 cup sugar
3/4 lb marshmallows
1 cup drained Crushed pineapple
1 pt Whipping Cream
Combine ground cranberries and sugar. Let stand 2 hours. Whip Cream, Add the marshmallows which have been cut in small pieces. Let stand 2 hours. Add Cranberry



Pinewheels oven 325°
Melt - 1 (6oz) pkg Choc Chips in double boiler
With 2 T shortening
Cedd 1 can (15oz) sweetened Condensed Milk
1 cup flour
1 tsp Vanilla
Blend - spread in 15x10x1 jelly roll pan
Bake - 325° for 8 min
(Prepare Butterscotch filling)
turn out of pan onto a towel sprinkled
With powered. Spread with butterscotch

Pinwheels

PREHEAT OVEN TO 325°F

INGREDIENTS

1 (6 oz) package chocolate chips

2 tablespoons shortening

1 can (15 oz) sweetened condensed milk

1 cup flour

1 teaspoon vanilla

Powdered sugar

½ cup chopped nuts

Butterscotch Filling

1 (6 oz) package butterscotch morsels

2 tablespoons shortening

Melt over boiling water.

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt chocolate chips in double boiler with 2 tablespoons shortening.
2. Add sweetened condensed milk, flour, and vanilla. Blend. Spread in a 15 × 10 × 1-inch jelly roll pan.
3. Bake at 325°F for 8 minutes. Prepare butterscotch filling.
4. Turn out of pan onto a towel sprinkled with powdered sugar. Spread with butterscotch filling. Sprinkle with ½ cup chopped nuts.
5. Roll up from long side. Wrap and chill ½ hour. Cut into ¼-inch slices.



Pie Crust

INGREDIENTS

2¼ cups flour
¾ cup shortening (lard)
¼ cup butter
6 to 8 tablespoons milk
¾ teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Sift flour and salt into mixing bowl.
   Cut in shortening [and butter] with pastry blender (coarse corn meal).
2. Add milk. Roll dough.

"I know you've never bought a frozen pie crust in your life."

— KARI, TO MY GRANDMA



WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE
YOU CAN DEPEND ON IN THE BLACK HILLS

Sanford Health is expanding access to trusted providers and specialty care in the Black Hills.

For women in the region, this means more access to gynecologic care close to home. Women can receive care for every stage of life, including annual wellness visits, contraceptive counseling, menopause care, treatment for pelvic floor disorders, infertility care and minimally invasive gynecologic surgery.

"Access to women's healthcare is growing," said Miranda Pray-Dede, MD, a gynecologist at Sanford Health Haines Ave Clinic in Rapid City. "Between the great care already available in the community and Sanford's expanding program, women here are going to have more options than ever to get the care they need."

732-577-925 10/26

Comprehensive gynecology care

Rapid City serves as a healthcare hub for patients throughout western South Dakota and neighboring states.

"I understand the barriers to care women here have faced, whether it's driving hours for specialty care or waiting weeks to months for an appointment," Dr. Pray-Dede said.

Dr. Pray-Dede joined Sanford Health in July after practicing obstetrics and gynecology in Watertown, South Dakota, for 17 years. She's now helping build Sanford Health's women's health program in Rapid City, which will offer a full spectrum of gynecology services.

"It's not about replacing the great care that's already here. It's about building on it so the whole community is better equipped to meet the growing demand for healthcare," said Dr. Pray-Dede.

Expanding care across the region

Sanford Health continues to expand its local presence through new locations, including:

- The Endoscopy Center, LLC
- Sanford Health Jordan Drive Clinic
- Sanford Health Tower Road Clinic
- Sanford Health Sheridan Lake Road Clinic

The system's growth also includes Black Hills Orthopedic & Spine Center, Black Hills Plastic Surgery and affiliated sites within the Black Hills Surgical Hospital network, including Black Hills Urgent Care and ProMotion Physical Therapy and Sanford Health Creekside Clinic becoming a part of Sanford Health.

These partnerships connect patients to Sanford Health's integrated network of care, including specialty and subspecialty care, clinical trials, veterans' precision medicine and more.

Investing in the future of the Black Hills

Sanford Health's investment in the Black Hills is focused not only on today's needs but on the future of healthcare in the region.

In November 2025, Sanford Health announced a $300 million philanthropic gift from T. Denny Sanford to help establish the Sanford Black Hills Medical Center campus in Rapid City.

The future campus will expand access to specialty services and will include an emergency department, intensive care unit, oncology center, labor and delivery department and children's services. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2027, with completion expected by 2030.

For Dr. Pray-Dede, the continued growth of healthcare services across the Black Hills will have a meaningful impact, especially for women.



"I'm excited that the region is growing and women will especially stand to benefit as more resources are coming into the area," she said. "I want them to know that there is quality, compassionate gynecologic care within reach here at home."

Meet the people helping shape healthcare in your community at sanfordhealth.org/black-hills.

SANFORD HEALTH

HEARTFELT



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERRA SANCTA RETREAT CENTER

HOLIDAYS



HONORING LOVED ONES & HELPING YOURSELF HEAL

BY KRYSTAL BRESNAHAN

Love doesn't end with death, so grief never really goes away. But how can you embrace everything you feel when wishing for a "*Merry* Christmas" or "*Happy* Holidays"? Dionne Eastmo shares a special place to find peace and healing in the Black Hills and offers ideas for how to celebrate and remember your loved ones this holiday season.

THE MAKING OF THE CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN

Tucked into a wooded hillside by Terra Sancta Retreat Center is a winding path up to the Children's Memorial Garden. Nearby benches provide a place to rest and reflect. Depending on the season, brightly colored wildflowers or sparkling white snow surround four life-sized bronze statues: three smiling children running to

the outstretched arms of Jesus as he kneels before them. A granite plaque marks this as a holy place where families can celebrate and remember their children who have returned to God.

When Dionne Eastmo moved to Rapid City more than twenty years ago, she joined a Bible study group for mothers. These women were her first friends, and three of them had experienced the loss of a child. At the time, a Children's Memorial Garden was just a thought. Eastmo imagined a bench and a tree where people could come to sit and remember in peace. Today, standing among the pine trees, the garden includes a 17-foot-tall "Remember the Children" sculpture where the names of children are engraved on individual nameplates and all linked together.

"People share their stories of spending time there, finding peace, and experiencing healing. Each story is a little beautiful blessing."

Eastmo's youngest son, Jacob, is included among these names.

Born with profound disabilities, Jacob could not talk or walk. "We didn't protect him from the world or the world from him. We took him everywhere," Eastmo shares. "He enjoyed life, and his two older brothers learned to be compassionate by caring for him. Jacob helped us slow down and keep our focus on faith and family."

His life and death shaped the making of the Children's Memorial Garden. Jacob died on Easter morning, April 16, 2017. He was eleven years old. In lieu of flowers, donations were made to the proposed garden project, and memorial funds from his funeral went to support it. One year later, in the late summer of 2018, the dedication of the garden took place.

"We invited all the parents whose children's names were represented in the garden," Eastmo says. She remembers the bishop's blessing and a kids' musical group performing "I Can Only



Imagine" in American Sign Language. Before any flowers were planted, a large group of families gathered together on the bare dirt hill. It was a powerful ceremony.

Eastmo and her husband, Eric, knew the garden needed to be accessible. As parents with kids in strollers and caring for a son who used a wheelchair, they advocated for an ADA-compliant concrete path. To get this done, a local company donated labor and materials. Other labors of love included landscaping, designing and welding sculptures, assembling benches, and giving money.

Volunteers offered their time, treasure, and talent to make the garden happen, and contributions of all kinds continue to





sustain it. It takes a community to tend to the garden. “The overall impact far exceeded my expectations,” Eastmo says. “People share their stories of spending time there, finding peace, and experiencing healing. Each story is a little beautiful blessing.”

CREATING SPACE FOR GRIEF, SURPRISES, AND A LEGACY OF LOVE

“Right after Jacob died, my friend and I started going to Jacob’s grave together to say the rosary. Every month we make the trip, and so far, we’ve visited 112 times. Doing this transformed how I see the cemetery,” she says. “A place that once created a lot of anxiety is now a place of peace and holiness.”

Eastmo knows finding support in times of grief can help someone feel cared for and truly loved. She’s partnered with Brianne Edwards, a kindred spirit and grieving mother, to provide community resources and opportunities for other grieving parents.

Every January, they offer a seven-week grief group for bereaved parents experiencing the loss of a child. “Parents grieving their children go against the natural order of things. It’s an opportunity to sit with others who share this life experience,” she explains.

A few times a year, the team also leads a two-hour mini-retreat for parents experiencing pregnancy loss before birth. “Now with a greater awareness of pregnancy loss, we’ve seen an increase in nameplates created for the Children’s Memorial Garden to recognize and remember miscarried babies. After our gatherings, we encourage parents to visit the garden, be open and present to whatever God offers.”

Beyond the grief group and mini-retreats, visitors are welcome in the garden at any time of year both during the day and at night. Eastmo recommends bringing a flashlight to illuminate the path after dark and says the statues are all equipped with glowing lights.

When she visits, she still encounters the unexpected. “In grief, feeling intense sadness and joy is possible. Sometimes, when you sit at the garden during the day, you can hear children laughing. Joy exudes from the playground at the school nearby and it reaches you up there.”



'TIS THE SEASON TO CELEBRATE AND REMEMBER

Eastmo suggests being present with grieving friends, family, or neighbors this holiday season. ″Keep offering invitations and opportunities to connect, and try not to take it personally if the answer is ′no, thanks,′ or ′not right now.′″

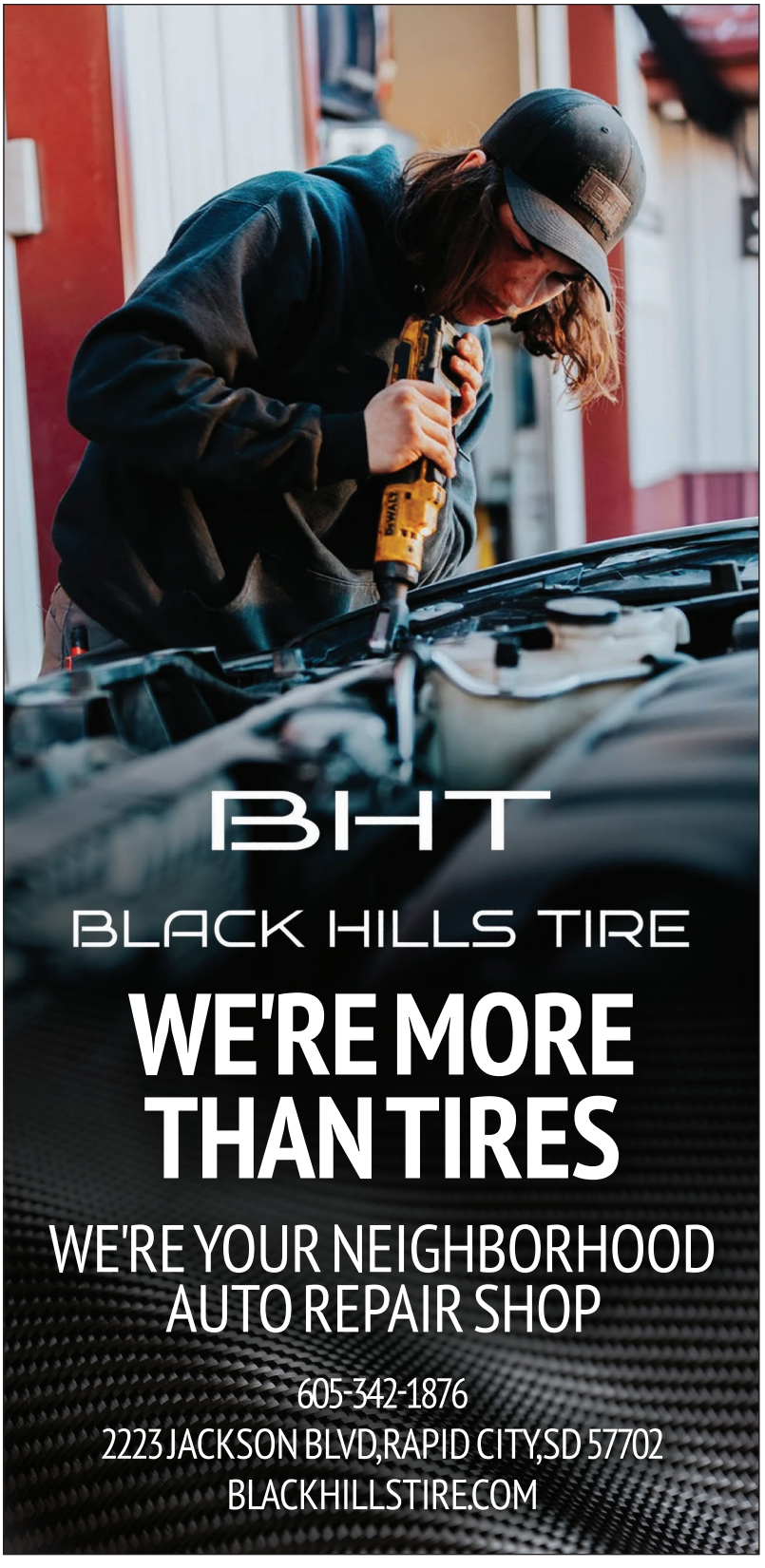
“Everyone’s grief journey is unique to them. You already feel your worst without the ‘shoulds’ of what to do or not to do. There’s no wrong way to do it, so let people grieve however they need to,” she recommends.

“People often fear saying the wrong thing. They try to avoid reminding a mom that her son died. But there’s not a day that goes by that I forget that. Sharing memories of Jacob doesn’t remind me of the pain. It reminds me that you remember him, and that’s a treasured gift.”

Six Ideas to Honor & Remember Your Loved Ones

1. Light a candle for your loved one at special family occasions when they are missed to help make them feel more present.
2. Hang a photo of your loved one in an ornament on your Christmas tree.
3. Hang a stocking for your loved one and fill it with items to donate to a local shelter.
4. Donate a gift that your loved one would have liked.
5. Do an act of kindness in your loved one’s memory.
6. Visit the Children’s Memorial Garden on the Terra Sancta Campus at 2101 City Springs Rd., Rapid City, SD 57702.

Visit terrasancta.org for more info about Terra Sancta Retreat Center and the Children's Memorial Garden.


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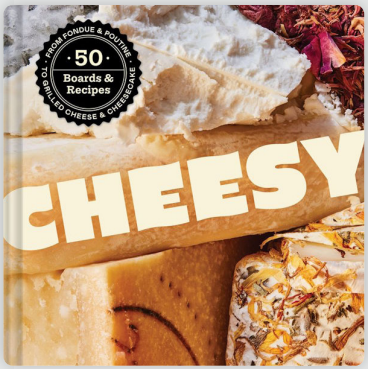

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BOOK

THE HOLIDAYS BRING FULL CALENDARS, FAMILIAR TRADITIONS, AND SOMETIMES A GOOD REASON TO SLIP AWAY WITH A BOOK.

CLUB

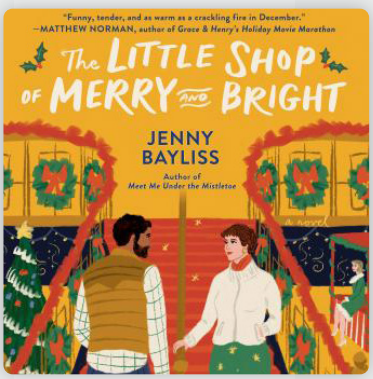
HERE ARE THREE PICKS FOR THE SEASON, PLUS A DECEMBER RELEASE TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR.



CHEESY BY FARIDEH SADEGHIN

COOKBOOK **MOOD:** PLAYFUL & COMFORTING

If you're always the first one at the cheese board, this one might be for you. Farideh Sadeghin brings together 50 cheese-focused recipes and boards, along with helpful advice on choosing, storing, and pairing cheese. There are ideas for entertaining guests and for those nights when something warm and cheesy sounds like the perfect dinner.

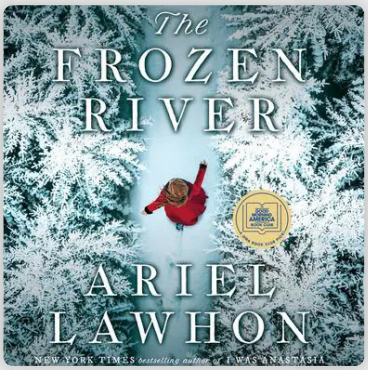


THE LITTLE SHOP OF MERRY AND BRIGHT

BY JENNY BAYLISS

HOLIDAY ROMANCE **MOOD:** WHIMSICAL & REFLECTIVE

Almost everyone has a moment they'd happily take back. For Casey, it's a rejected marriage proposal that became an internet sensation. When a Christmas spirit offers her a glimpse of five alternate lives, she gets to explore what might have happened if things had gone differently. Reach for this one when the holiday bustle calls for a little escape. The romance and magic make it a festive pick, while Casey's predicament offers plenty to think about when it comes to regret, second chances, and the lives we imagine for ourselves.



THE FROZEN RIVER BY ARIEL LAWHON

HISTORICAL FICTION **MOOD:** IMMERSIVE & GRIPPING

In 1789 Maine, midwife Martha Ballard knows that the truth isn't always what the people in power want to hear. When a suspicious death unsettles her community, the details she's carefully recorded in her diary take on new importance. Inspired by a real woman whose work left a remarkable historical record, Ariel Lawhon's novel combines mystery with a story about courage and conviction. Reach for this one when you're in the mood for a gripping winter read that will leave you thinking about justice, power, and the courage it takes to speak up.

SAVE A SPOT FOR THIS DECEMBER RELEASE



LINA & JUNE BY GENEVIEVE WHEELER

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

MOOD: BITTERSWEET & REFLECTIVE

Some friendships feel like they'll last forever, but growing up has a way of testing even the closest bonds. Lina and June couldn't be more different, yet their connection becomes an important part of both their lives. When unexpected challenges pull them in different directions, they face questions that don't have easy answers. How much can a friendship withstand? And what happens when the person who knows you best starts to feel like a stranger? Genevieve Wheeler's upcoming novel explores loyalty, forgiveness, and the friendships that shape who we become.

RELEASES DECEMBER 8, 2026

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GIVING THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

NORTHERN HILLS TRAINING CENTER CREATES BELONGING YEAR-ROUND

BY MIRANDA O'BRYAN HERTEL

There is a difference between being invited into the room and feeling welcome within it.

For Laura Wendland, that distinction separates inclusion from belonging.

"Inclusion is being invited into the room," she said. "Belonging is knowing your presence in that room actually matters — that people would notice if you weren't there, that you have a role, a voice, and relationships, not just a seat."

That distinction has shaped Laura's career as CEO of the Northern Hills Training Center, which supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Lawrence and Butte counties.

At NHTC, the goal isn't simply to make sure someone has a seat at the table. It's helping them build a life in which they know that seat was always theirs.

EVERYONE HAS A PURPOSE

Working with people with developmental disabilities wasn't the career Laura originally imagined. In college, she planned to work in law enforcement, specifically probation and parole. But after a mentor suggested she apply to Black Hills Special Services and a later move to Spearfish brought her to Northern Hills Training Center, her path began to change.





Starting as a direct support professional, Laura fell in love with the people she supported. Over the years, she worked her way through numerous positions, including case management and regional leadership. Each role gave her a broader understanding of the impact the right support can have on someone's life. Eventually, her career brought her back to NHTC as CEO.

"Every day I've spent in this field has led me to where I am now, and it turned out to be exactly where I was meant to be," Laura said. "Working with people with disabilities has been my real-life blessing."

Today, NHTC provides several services, including residential support, vocational and day programming, community employment, and medical support.

For one person, independence might mean a job they're proud of. For another, it could mean having a home of their own, close friendships, or simply the freedom to make everyday choices many of us rarely stop to consider.

"A meaningful life looks different for every





"TRUE INCLUSION MEANS SOMEONE HAS A GENUINE ROLE — A JOB, A FRIENDSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY — NOT JUST AN INVITATION."

person we support, and that's really the point — it isn't our job to define it for them; it's our job to help them build the life they want," Laura said. "Meaning comes from having real choices and real relationships, not just from being cared for."

A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Laura has seen firsthand just how much that philosophy can change a life.

Her early years at NHTC came during a period of significant change in disability services across South Dakota, as support transitioned to community-based care. In the decades since, Laura has watched the focus continue to shift toward choice, employment, independence, and genuine community participation.

She has also seen what can happen when someone is given the opportunity to find their place within the community.

"When you're a part of planning a transition from a state institution to community life, and you watch that person become a recognized employee, a volunteer at their church, an active member of the community — there's just something about that feeling," Laura said. "Those moments are why this work matters."

For Laura, belonging has always meant more than simply being present.

"True inclusion means someone has a genuine role — a job, a friendship, responsibility — not just an invitation," she said. "It means the space itself adapts, rather than expecting the person to fit into it exactly as it already exists."

THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

During the holiday season, when gathering and giving take on added meaning, that sense of belonging becomes especially visible.

"'A place at the table' is really what our mission is about year-round — it's just especially visible during the holidays," Laura said. "For us, it means the individuals we support aren't on



the sidelines of community life; they're part of it, with the same chance to give, celebrate, and be surrounded by people who care about them as anyone else."

While attitudes toward disability have changed significantly throughout Laura's career, there is still room to open more doors across the Northern Hills. NHTC continues working toward more competitive employment opportunities, accessible housing, and greater recognition of adults with disabilities as neighbors and coworkers — not simply as people who need services.

"They are, first and foremost, people — with the same range of hopes, talents, and desire for connection as anyone else," Laura said. "Disability is one part of their story, not the whole of it."

Especially during a season centered on gathering, Laura hopes people across the Northern Hills remember that creating belonging doesn't require a grand gesture.

Sometimes, it begins with something much simpler.

"Get to know someone. Hire someone. Invite someone."

Because having a place at the table isn't just about receiving an invitation. It's knowing that when you arrive, someone is genuinely glad you're there — and that if you weren't, you would be missed.

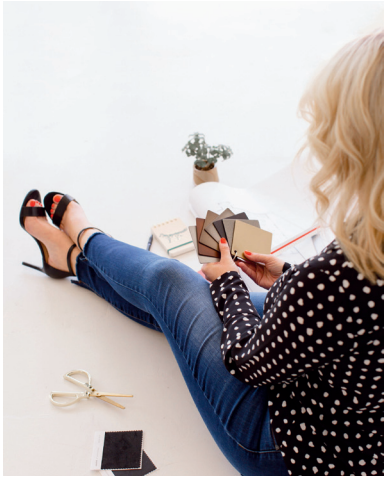
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THE HUMANE SOCIETY'S

HONEY BADGER

BY ELLA SMITH

If you tuned in to this year's Puppy Bowl, you may have noticed a familiar face. For the first time, a puppy from South Dakota was featured in the event. Calamity Jane, affectionately known as CJ, came from our very own Humane Society of the Black Hills. Behind CJ's big moment was Tammy Barrows, the organization's executive director.

If you were to step into Tammy's office, you might notice the array of honey badger memorabilia.

"When I was interviewed for the position, they asked me what my spirit animal would be, and I told them it would be a honey badger," said Tammy.

Honey badgers, known for their fierce and determined nature, remind Tammy not to worry about what others think of her and to never give up on her goals. This tenacity and drive have always pushed her to succeed in her career and now help keep the Humane Society on track to reach its five-year growth plan.

When Tammy first heard about the executive director position, she was intrigued by the five-year plan to establish the Humane Society as a pillar of the Black Hills community. It also fit perfectly with her plan to retire in five years, giving her the chance to implement changes and identify and train her successor.

"I wanted to end my career by making something sustainable and meaningful," said Tammy. "And



“I like picking out the best in people and giving them a hand.”



help the Humane Society become a pillar of the community.”

Tammy previously spent decades working in the retail industry, specifically in book sales. That background unexpectedly came in handy when she collaborated with author Andrew Russo to publish books about Calamity Jane and Kitty City — a new area designated to house cats and to offer families a calmer environment in which to meet them.

While she hadn’t worked for a nonprofit before joining the Humane Society, Tammy was no stranger to community involvement. She had served as a board member for Special Olympics and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and started the Dacoda Instrument Drive, which refurbishes and repurposes old instruments so every child in South Dakota has the chance to learn an instrument. Throughout her career and community involvement, Tammy has found ways to bring out the best in the people around her.

“I love thinking outside the box and helping different individuals in the community. I like picking out the best in people and giving them a hand,” said Tammy.

Since Tammy became executive director in February 2025, the Humane Society has added Kitty City and opened a community education and outreach room. Other organizations have also found ways to collaborate. Eagle Scouts have worked with the Humane Society on their final projects, while the warden of the women’s prison partnered with Tammy to create a foster program where incarcerated women can foster and train dogs.








KITTY CITY

"I get to work with other nonprofits in the community, and we get to help each other and the community, so everybody wins."

"I love my team," said Tammy. "I get to work with other nonprofits in the community, and we get to help each other and the community, so everybody wins."

One dog, Jazmine, is a perfect example of a win-win situation. Volunteers and staff at the Humane Society worked with RyeDoodle, a dog boarding and training facility, to train Jazmine in dock diving, a canine sport where dogs swim after and retrieve objects thrown into the water. Jazmine took to it like a duck to water and even competed nationally. It was a win for the Humane Society volunteers and staff who took the time to learn about dock diving, a win for RyeDoodle, which trained her free of charge, and a win for Jazmine, who was adopted afterward.

"Stories like that are all because of our volunteers. They're the ones taking time out of their day to learn dock diving and teach it to Jazmine," said Tammy.

That's just one example of the dedication shown by the 36 staff members and around 100 volunteers who keep the Humane Society running. During the holidays, when many travel or enjoy time off, there are always staff and volunteers feeding, walking, and caring for the animals.

"There are no days off," said Tammy. "The animals are here so we're here."

Tammy also emphasized the numerous ways people in the community can get involved.

"There are so many ways for the community to get involved: washing dishes, walking dogs, fostering animals, or donating food and supplies," said Tammy. "And if you're thinking of adding an animal to your family, think of the Humane Society first."

Now nearly two years into her role as executive director, Tammy has no plans to slow down until the Humane Society has reached its five-year goals. There are still two more building projects in the works, a plan to ensure a livable wage for staff, and various milestones ahead as the Humane Society works toward a more sustainable future.

And if Tammy's honey badger spirit is any indication, she won't stop until she gets there.

Visit hsbh.org for more info about the Humane Society.


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