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PUBLISHER:
M&S MEDIA • RAPID CITY, SD



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Letter FROM THE Editor

October is a month of awareness. A month that carries meaning for so many, including Breast Cancer Awareness, Domestic Violence Awareness, ADHD Awareness, and Down Syndrome Awareness. But there is another that is often spoken about more quietly: Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month.

This editor's article took me four weeks to write. Four weeks of adding a sentence, walking away, coming back, deleting something, trying again — and shedding more tears than I can count.

Because even after all this time, there is still not a day that goes by that I don't think about the baby I lost.

For so many women who have dreamed of having a family, there is something almost impossible to explain about pregnancy loss. In one moment, you are imagining a life. You are dreaming about who this little person will become, what they will look like, and how they will fit into your family. They are already a part of you. And then, suddenly, the future you had begun imagining is gone.

My day is February 21, 2021.

I was nine weeks pregnant. I remember standing in my bathroom, feeling cramps and calling my doctor. The following Friday, I went in for my first ultrasound. I was so excited to see our little bundle of joy.

But this ultrasound was different from the ones I remembered during my first pregnancy. We were in the room for maybe 10 minutes. We got a photo, and then I walked down the hall to meet with my doctor. I hadn't realized that I hadn't heard a heartbeat. I was still excited.

Then my doctor came in, held my hand, and told me I had lost my baby.

Everything after that is a blur until I remember getting to the car with my husband.

Shock. Pain. Confusion. Self-doubt. Anger. Every emotion seemed to come at once. I had so many people who loved and supported me, but there were simply no words that could make it better.

That's one of the things loss has taught me: sometimes there aren't words.

Sometimes the people who love you desperately want to say the right thing, but there is no "right" thing to say. Sometimes you don't know what you need or how to respond. Sometimes all you can do is make it through that moment, and then the next one.

But what I remember most from those days is love.

People hugged me without saying a word. My husband would reach over and simply hold my hand. "I love you" texts came from so many people. No one could take away what had happened, but they could remind me that I didn't have to carry it alone.

Loss is hard. Loss is painful. And grief doesn't follow a timeline or look the same for everyone. There is no correct way to remember, to heal, or to move forward. The only advice I can offer is to give yourself time, give yourself grace, and allow yourself to feel whatever you need to feel.

Every February 21, I try to take the day off. I give myself that day to think about my baby and to honor the life I imagined. Every day, I wear a ring that represents my baby — a small, quiet reminder of a love that never disappeared simply because that pregnancy ended.

Today, I also have my youngest child, who fills our home with love, life, and laughter. Her life did not replace the baby I lost, nor did her arrival erase my grief. I have simply learned that joy and grief can

exist together. A heart can hold both.

And maybe that is what I have learned most in the years since February 21, 2021: moving forward doesn't mean leaving someone behind.

For every woman who has experienced pregnancy or infant loss, whether it happened yesterday or decades ago, whether you speak about it openly or carry it quietly, whether you mark a date or simply feel the ache when it unexpectedly finds you, I hope you know there is space for your grief.

Your baby mattered. Your experience mattered. Your love mattered.

And it still does.

*Until next time,
Chantel McDonnell*



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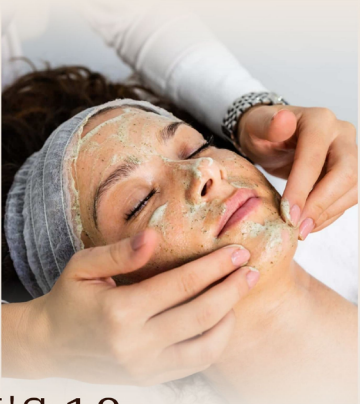
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THE COURAGE TO create

BY AVERY PORCH

Amber Hansen has always had a creative side. As a kid, she would make forts out of cardboard boxes, painting elaborate scenes on the sides. She put on magic shows for her parents and loved watching craft shows on TV. Once, she even tried to build a treehouse in the backyard.

Even though she loved art class in elementary and middle school, she never considered pursuing art as a career. When she started high school, her family moved from Wyoming to Utah, giving her the opportunity to take more advanced art classes. She experimented with different mediums, dabbling in watercolor, ceramics, photography, and wheel throwing. After graduation, she began college as an art major but eventually switched to social work. She later met her husband, whose career brought them to the Black Hills.



It was only in the last few years that Amber began pursuing art seriously. “I had to build confidence to get there,” she says. “I started out with small craft shows, and then I began exploring the fine art scene.” She recalls the first time she ever displayed her work at a craft show

— the defining moment that led her to think, I can actually make a career out of this.

“I did a craft show in Bear Lake, Utah, and it was one of the very first places I showed my work. It was a great place to start — it was a place I knew well, and people were surprisingly receptive.” She made several sales that day, which gave her the boost of confidence she needed. Amber now sells original pieces, accepts custom commissions, and leads painting parties. She even built an art studio in her backyard, reminiscent of her treehouse-building days.

Many of her paintings are inspired by the natural landscapes and wild beauty of South Dakota. Her acrylic painting *Prairie Guardian* depicts a bison standing on the prairie, with autumn trees and snow-capped hills in the distance as a storm gathers overhead. Another recent piece, *Sunrise Over Still Water*, captures the serene beauty of Sylvan Lake.

Amber often finds herself drawn to the same

“It feels
*wild, peaceful,
and timeless*
all at once.”

places again and again. Her favorite places to visit are Custer and Needles Highway. She says she finds something new to appreciate each time. “There is something so majestic and almost otherworldly about that area,” she says. “The granite formations, the trees,

and the way the light moves through the landscape give me so much to work with as a painter. But beyond the beauty, there is a feeling there that I really love — it feels wild, peaceful, and timeless all at once. I think that is what keeps bringing me back.”

She also draws inspiration from classic oil painters like Andrew Wyeth, Winslow Homer, and George Inness. “I love the way they were able to take a landscape or an ordinary moment and give it a deeper emotional feeling,” she says. Through her work, Amber hopes to evoke similar emotions — the peacefulness of nature, the beauty of changing seasons, and the rhythms of daily life.

Amber says that one of her paintings, *Fields of Gold*, seems to resonate the most with people. Inspired by the 1993 song, the piece depicts a girl walking through a vast, open field. “I’ve had several people tell me that it brings back a feeling or memory from their own lives — sometimes of growing up



*To learn more
about Amber, visit
amberhansenstudio.com*

in the country, visiting a place they once loved, or simply feeling a sense of peace and tranquility. I love that a painting can mean something very personal to someone, even if their story is completely different from the one I had in my mind when I painted it.”

This past summer, Amber was commissioned to work on a mural in downtown Rapid City, commemorating the United States’ 250th anniversary. She navigated several new challenges, from using scaffolding for the first time to figuring out how to achieve symmetry on such a large scale. She spent nearly two weeks working on the piece. “I was really proud to contribute to the mural project in downtown Rapid City,” she shares. “I love my country, so being asked to be part of a project that celebrates our history and community was a real honor. It felt meaningful to add a small piece of my own work to something that will be part of Rapid City and its story for years to come.”

When she began, Amber never could have imagined where those first craft shows would lead. What began as a simple way to share her artwork has brought unexpected opportunities and challenged her to grow in new ways. “It’s easy to get intimidated or scared,” she admits. “But if you’re thinking of sharing your creative work, just do it.” From displaying her original artwork to taking on commissioned pieces, Amber shows just how far a little courage can go.

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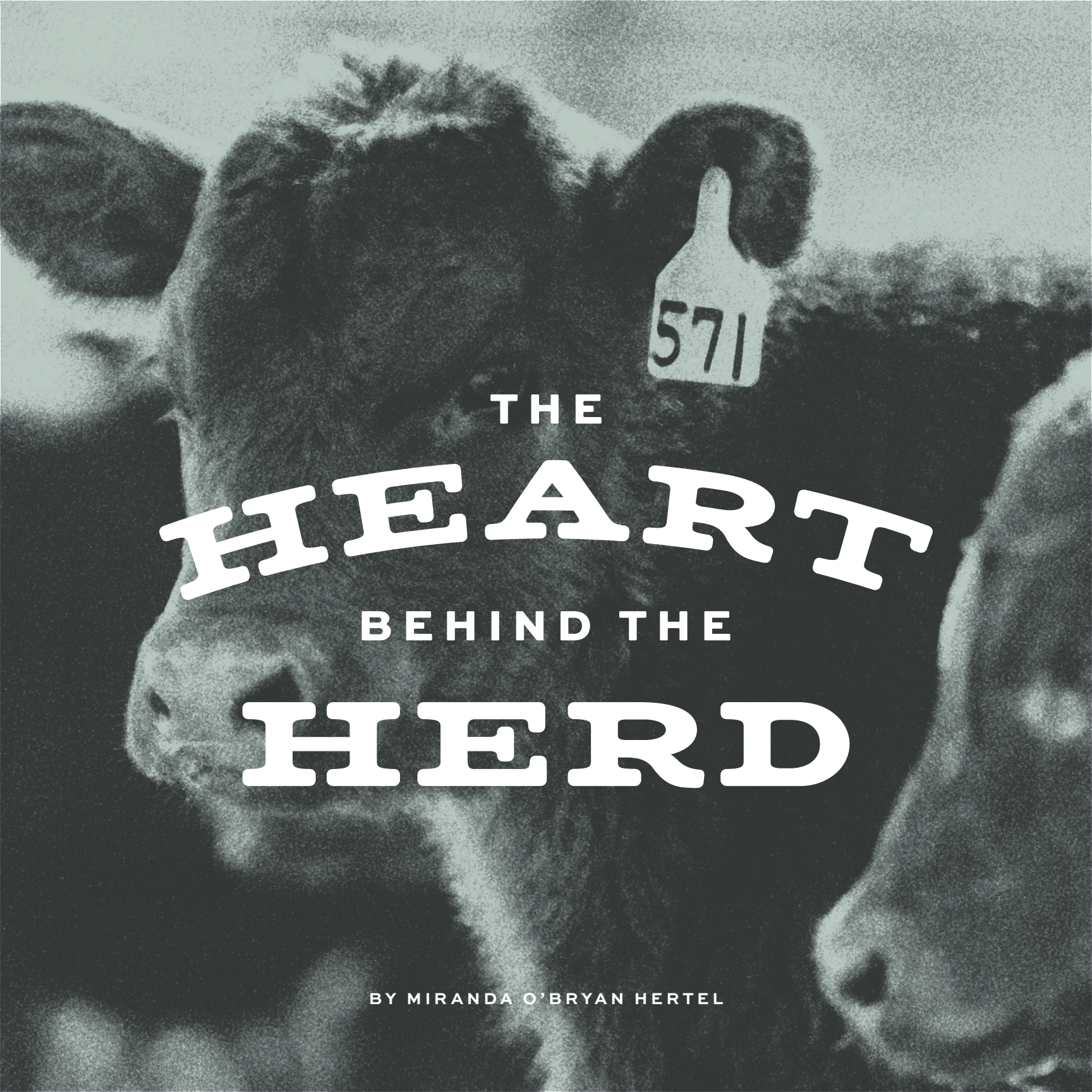
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THE HEART BEHIND THE HERD

BY MIRANDA O'BRYAN HERTEL



HOW KENDRA PAULTON IS **RECONNECTING FAMILIES** TO DAKOTA CANYON RANCH

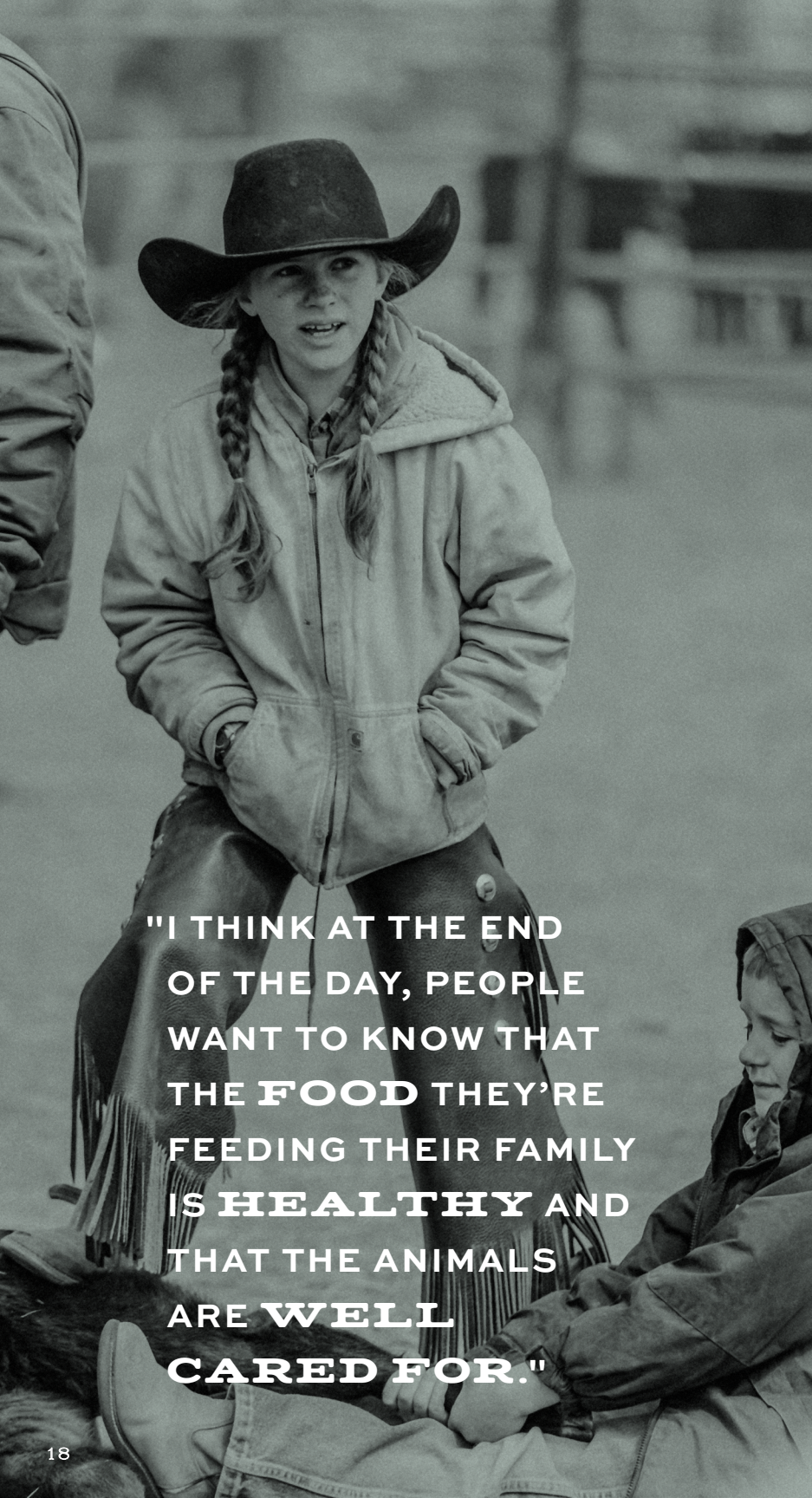
As a mom of seven, Kendra Paulton loves grocery pickup as much as anybody. But she's also uniquely aware that convenience has separated consumers from the people producing their food.

"We're so used to big box stores, and especially now with our smartphones and the one-touch quick ordering and grocery pickup — which, I'm a mom of seven, so I'm absolutely not knocking grocery pickup — but one of the downsides of that is that we've become so removed from our food supply," said Kendra. "Oh, well, beef



just comes from the grocery store. Our milk just comes from the grocery store.' Well, no, it doesn't. There was a farmer. There was a rancher who grew that food."

Dakota Canyon Ranch, a ranch-to-table operation, was born out of this disconnect. It offers local pickup and nationwide shipping, ensuring that consumers



"I THINK AT THE END
OF THE DAY, PEOPLE
WANT TO KNOW THAT
THE FOOD THEY'RE
FEEDING THEIR FAMILY
IS **HEALTHY** AND
THAT THE ANIMALS
ARE **WELL
CARED FOR.**"

have complete transparency about their beef's origin, how the cattle were raised and fed, and the people behind it.

"I think at the end of the day, people want to know that the food they're feeding their family is healthy and that the animals are well cared for."

At Dakota Canyon Ranch, Kendra's role includes marketing, sales, and education, and, most importantly, relationship building.

"I've developed some awesome relationships through all of it. I believe we were created for relationships. Everything that we do, no matter what our occupation is — ranching, office work, whatever — it all comes down to relationships."

Dakota Canyon Ranch is an offshoot of the Paulton family ranch, a fourth-generation operation outside of Custer.

On the ranch, contributing starts young. Toddlers learn numbers by calling out ear tags as cattle move through the chute. By five, they might be handed a flag and given a safe place along the alley. Older children ride horseback, move cattle, and operate equipment alongside the adults.

"My husband Travis's parents are still on the place, as well as his sister, her husband, and their three children. And it's us and our children," Kendra said. "It's truly a family operation. Everybody has a place, everybody is involved."



Her oldest daughter has an instinct for animal husbandry and has become a valuable hand on the ranch, while one of her sons can operate ranch equipment better than she can. No matter where their lives take them, Kendra hopes the ranch teaches her children valuable life skills.

"Everybody is gifted in their own way, in the way that God has uniquely wired them. There are going to be jobs that are fun and just don't feel like work. But the reality is, there are always mundane tasks, no matter what you do. Sometimes we just pull up our bootstraps, and we just

go get the job done — and we can get it done with a good attitude."

From riding in feed trucks to tagging along with Mom and Dad, Kendra's children are creating their own versions of the childhood memories she treasures most.

"Some of my favorite memories from as far back as I can remember were going to the dairy farm, watching my dad and his family milk the cows every day. I would get to help feed the bottle calves," she said. "Those are truly some of my earliest and most formative childhood memories. So agriculture, farming, is just in my blood."



Agriculture may have been in her blood, but the Black Hills captured her heart.

Kendra grew up in a rural Minnesota town of about 200 people, but first came to the Black Hills as a teenager to attend Rainbow Bible Ranch. She returned to work at the camp for three summers, drawn back not only by the landscape and way of life, but by the people she met along the way.

That connection became so strong that when Kendra told her high school guidance counselor she wanted to pursue photography in the Black Hills, the counselor questioned why she was limiting her college search to the area.

“I just looked at her and said, ‘Because I love the Black Hills, and my heart is in the Black Hills. That’s my home.’ If they had a photography course I could go to and it was in the Black Hills, that’s where I wanted to be.”

And once again, it came back to relationships.

“That was largely based on relationships that I had formed out here, and just my love of the West and the ranching community,” she said.

Today, Kendra has carved out a role on the ranch that’s uniquely her own. Along with managing Dakota Canyon Ranch’s marketing, sales, and customer education, she helps with bookkeeping, raises their seven children, and fills whatever role the day requires — from feeding cattle crews miles into Forest Service land to keeping things moving behind the scenes.

For Kendra, those roles aren’t secondary to the ranch’s work — they’re essential to keeping a multigenerational operation running.

“If we can do that backbone work and the foundational or just the supportive stuff, it really frees other people up to do what they do well,” she said. “There’s something really beautiful about what happens when you can work

together as a family and just complement each other in that way.”

That sense of shared purpose stretches as far back as it does forward. The family’s cattle brand is the same one Travis’ grandparents used decades ago and passed down when they retired from ranching.

Now, as Kendra watches another generation grow up on the ranch beneath that same brand, she thinks less about

what Dakota Canyon Ranch might look like decades from now and more about what she hopes never changes.

“Ultimately, the legacy of the ranch that I hope holds true 25, 50, 100 years from now is that the family loves Jesus, loves people, and is made up

of excellent animal caretakers and stewards of the land,” she said. “I just want those things to always hold true.”

For Kendra, perhaps that is what “know your rancher, know your food” really means. It’s knowing the hands that raised it, the land that sustained it, and the generations of people behind it.

Because at Dakota Canyon Ranch, beef may be what brings people to the table, but relationships are what they hope will keep them there for generations to come.

**"THERE'S SOMETHING
REALLY BEAUTIFUL
ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN YOU CAN WORK
TOGETHER AS
A FAMILY..."**



STITCHING PASSIONS TOGETHER

BY ELLA SMITH

Creativity and organization are often seen as opposites. If a kid colors inside the lines, we say they're organized. If a kid colors outside the lines, we say they're creative. But for Katy Lee, attention to detail and imagination have always worked hand in hand, guiding her through several entrepreneurial ventures and, most recently, inspiring House of Thread, her pop-up embroidery business.

Although Katy's life wasn't always filled with

the thrum of her embroidery machine, it was always filled with creativity. As a child, she loved sewing and would sit on the floor, arranging her beads into patterns again and again.

"I've always been an entrepreneur," said Katy. "When I was a kid, I loved making jewelry, and I actually still do when I have the time. I would make different pieces and sell them at farmers markets and local events."

This interest in business led her to Cottey



I WANTED
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THAT FELT
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MINE

College, where she studied business management and administration. But her education extended beyond the classroom. Never one to be held back by her stage of life, Katy started her first business, an online clothing retail store, and gained 300,000 followers. She dubbed it her “professional hobby.”

After earning a two-year degree from Cottey College, Katy still wasn’t sure what she wanted to do, but she knew she loved college. She attended the University of South Dakota for four more years, earning both bachelor’s and master’s degrees. She went on to work as a financial controller at Hot Pink, an advertising agency, where she gained skills she would later rely on in her own business endeavors.

“Eventually I knew I needed to get back to owning my own business and really give it my all,” said Katy. “And, let’s be honest, I like working for myself.”

Katy kept this goal in the back of her mind. She married her husband, Ben, in 2023 and gained her stepson. That same year, Hot Pink closed its doors, signaling the start of a new chapter in Katy’s career: business ownership. Her first venture was Letter and Light Co. Black Hills, an event service offering large, decorative light-up letters that have appeared at numerous weddings and graduations across the Black Hills. She also continued growing Lee Liquidation, a large-scale resale business that evolved from the online venture she started in college. But neither was quite the dream business Katy wanted to build for herself.

“Apparently, I decided I wasn’t busy enough, because I started thinking about creating something of my own that could become a more full-time business, and now here we are with House of Thread,” said Katy. “Both Letter and Light Co. Black Hills and Lee Liquidation are really fun



businesses, but I was looking for something different that I could invest in full time and truly grow and scale. I wanted to create something that felt completely mine.”

When Katy came across a pop-up embroidery business on Instagram, she knew she had found the perfect idea. It combined her love of markets and events with the creativity of custom embroidery on the items people actually use. House of Thread was the fun, creative, and modern concept she was looking for.

“The beginning was absolute chaos! I was teaching myself how to run a commercial embroidery machine while simultaneously booking shows and trying to launch something completely new. In less than a year, we’ve moved into a new space that better accommodates our needs, hired help, expanded our services, and continued to figure things out as we grow. It has been a whirlwind, but a really exciting one.”

The business’s pop-up model allows Katy to offer a variety of services. At local craft fairs and markets, she sets up stands where customers can choose from specific embroidery “menus” and have their items customized on the spot. She also books events such as bridal showers and birthday parties, where guests can select from curated designs,

and completes custom orders for individuals and businesses.

“I love working with different clients and seeing all of the fun ideas people come up with. Embroidery doesn’t have to be restricted to a standard left-chest logo, and I love watching people come out of their shells and get creative with their designs and merchandise. I especially love helping businesses create pieces that people actually want to wear, not just another promotional item that eventually ends up in a landfill.”

Having spent much of her life in the Black Hills, Katy has always loved the community. She has found even more fulfillment in the small-business world, where she can interact with and invest in the people around her.

“There is such a need for unique, fun, creative businesses within our community. It’s important that we continue to have those things here and that we support the people behind the dreams that bring them to life. The Black Hills are home and always will be.”

Through starting and running House of Thread, Katy has learned that the greatest challenges are often connected to the greatest rewards. Balancing time with loved ones while investing in her business has taught her to accept help and to extend grace to herself and those around her.

THERE IS SUCH A NEED FOR UNIQUE, FUN, CREATIVE BUSINESSES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY.

“I’ve learned that balancing work and family is really hard when you have a business that requires so much of your time and attention. I’ve also learned that one person simply cannot do everything and that letting go of a little control and allowing other people to help has made life so much easier,” said Katy. “Most importantly, I’ve learned that you have to give yourself a break and have a little grace. Being a business owner is hard. There are long days, stressful moments, and plenty of learning as you go, but there are also so many rewards that make it worth it.”

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for comfort.

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see the fall
a signal end to endings
a gruffish gesture alerting
those who will not be alarmed
that we begin to stop
in order to begin
again.

LATE OCTOBER
BY MAYA ANGELOU



DRIVEN TO

BY BREY FUHRMANN

BECOME



THE GIRL WHO GOES FOR IT

Some people wait for opportunities to find them, but Eliot Kaemingk is not one of them. At just 17 years old, she already approaches life with intention. She balances school assignments and work responsibilities while continuing to explore her love of music through orchestra and at-home jam sessions on her guitar and banjo, all while making time for her friends. Yet, Eliot's story is not defined by any one achievement or moment but by her willingness to step forward, learn, and discover what she is capable of along the way. While many of her peers are thinking about what comes next, Eliot has already begun building a future of her own.

The oldest of four children, Eliot comes from an active family. "We are really busy, but we always find the time

to be thankful for each other," she says, her love and admiration for her parents and siblings shining through. In the evenings, the family gathers around the dinner table to reconnect over a shared meal. These moments have taught Eliot the value of strong relationships with her close-knit family, school community, and friends.

When she isn't with her family, Eliot is navigating her junior year at Stevens High School. She pushes herself to succeed in her AP classes and participates in extracurricular activities such as orchestra and Knowledge Bowl. "I think it's important to challenge yourself," she says. "I'm in a youth orchestra program outside of school, and I also like to create art and music. I have played the viola since fourth grade. Sometimes I play with my best friend while she plays the violin."

Through difficult times, Eliot has learned just how important healthy, supportive friendships can be. "I really value friendships. My friends are always there for me. I had a hard time in 10th grade and felt disrespected



while navigating some friendships. I had a lot going on and didn't need to focus on people who didn't value me. I have good friends who like to be around me." Her best friend is one of the biggest role models in her life. "She is such a hard worker but still has time for fun! I admire her kindness. Watching her be helpful has made me want to be like that."

BUILT TOGETHER

Eliot keeps her schedule full. Clearly driven and determined, she is deeply rooted in her community and has learned that success rarely comes from standing still. While balancing school and friendships, she also dedicates her time to her family, supporting her siblings and often helping run the family business. That dedication became especially clear when Eliot took on one of her biggest responsibilities yet: helping her mother open Toastique, a local restaurant known for its gourmet toast creations. From setting up furniture to creating the artwork displayed on the restaurant walls, Eliot worked alongside her mother to bring the local eatery to life and create a new gathering place within the community.

When asked about one of the biggest challenges she has faced, Eliot didn't hesitate to name the restaurant's opening. "Opening Toastique was so hard on me and my family. It was difficult to explain to my friends how much it affected me too. It caused a lot of stress, but my family supported one another, and we figured it out. It has taught me to respect people's work and also protect my peace and love for myself. At first, balancing the responsibilities of school, work, and life was difficult, but it has gotten a lot easier." For Eliot, showing up for each shift means far more than just an after-school job; it demonstrates her commitment to her family and to the future she is creating for herself.



READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Eliot understands the importance of healthy relationships and makes sure to give herself that same care and consideration. Prioritizing herself wasn't always easy, but it was another challenge she was determined to overcome. "I used to be afraid to try new things. I was afraid of judgment and failure, but my dad has encouraged me to try the scary things. I want to be a hard worker and still go out and have fun. I want to try new things without fear."

Through her father's guidance and support, Eliot has learned that success can be measured not only by her accomplishments in AP classes but also by the growth she experiences in her mind and heart. Pushing herself to embrace new experiences and setting high goals in school are just the beginning of this ambitious 17-year-old's story. "People assume a lot about my family. They don't see how busy I am. They think I am quiet and only involved with work. They think I'm strict. But I'm just focused. I want to be efficient. I hope to have a good career in a job I love, maybe working in research science to benefit the world or discover something."

No matter what Eliot accomplishes in life, she will do so with heart and admirable determination. The focus she brings to her work and the intention behind her everyday actions prove that she is not simply the quiet girl in a high school classroom, but someone who is capable of so much more.

THE LOCAL EDIT

BY KELSY
PETERSON

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Black Hills Farmers Market

RAPID CITY | WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS

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Fall Marketplace Pop Up

RAPID CITY | OCTOBER 3

Boutiques, local creators, and small businesses are coming together at The Monument on October 3rd for another Fall Marketplace Pop Up! Grab some friends and enjoy the fall atmosphere as you browse for gifts and goods.

Black Hills Powwow

RAPID CITY | OCTOBER 9-11

Witness the splendor of the Black Hills Powwow. This premier American Indian cultural event features dancers, singers, drummers, and a vibrant artisan marketplace. Beyond the performances, attendees can explore a fine art show and the He Sapa Win pageant.

Monster Mash

CUSTER | OCTOBER 24

Get your costumes ready for the Monster Mash in Custer! The event entry fee includes an official open-container cup, a poker hand, and snacks as you make your way along the Poker Pub Crawl to the Monster Mash Bash at the Custer Beacon.

PumpkinFest

BELLE FOURCHE | OCTOBER 24

Enjoy a day filled with fall-themed fun at Belle Fourche's PumpkinFest, located at the Tri-State Museum & Visitor Center. Browse local vendors, participate in family activities, and enter the kids in the costume contest.

Fall Vendor Fair

SUNDANCE, WY | OCTOBER 24

Gather at the Shooting Sports Building at the Crook County Fairgrounds in Sundance for seasonal fun at the Fall Vendor Fair. Shop a unique selection of goods from local crafters and small businesses!



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bringing

compassion

TO THE CONVERSATION

BY MADIGAN SCHMITZ

There are conversations that happen quietly, behind closed doors, in doctors' offices, hospital rooms, and the privacy of a couple's home. Conversations about loss that, for far too long, have stayed unspoken, making an already painful experience feel isolating on top of everything else.

Dr. Michelle Krohn is working to change that. An OBGYN with Monument Health Spearfish, Dr. Krohn has spent her career showing up for women on both their best days and their hardest ones. She delivers babies in the middle of the night, performs surgery, and sees patients in the clinic and the emergency room. But woven throughout her work is a reality that can be hard to come to terms with: loss is far more common than most people realize. "One of the most common misconceptions is that people think it's a rare thing," Dr. Krohn says. "It's actually very common. It's just not something that people talk about a lot."

Miscarriages affect a significant portion of pregnancies, with the vast majority occurring in the first trimester. Dr. Krohn notes that women are now aware of pregnancies sooner than ever before, and what may look like a rise in miscarriage rates is largely a reflection of earlier detection.

The most common cause, she explains, is chromosomal abnormality, which accounts for roughly 50% of early pregnancy losses. When an egg and sperm combine, each contributing a set of chromosomes, errors can occur. An extra chromosome, or a missing one, can result in a pregnancy that simply isn't

compatible with life. It isn't caused by going for a run, or getting stressed at work, or swimming in a lake. And yet the women sitting in Dr. Krohn's office often



believe otherwise.

"Women very commonly blame themselves for a miscarriage," she says. "And really, most miscarriages are not things that you could cause."

Dispelling that guilt is one of the most important parts of her work, as well as making sure women are educated about what comes next. When a miscarriage is diagnosed, patients are given three options: expectant

management, allowing the body to complete the process naturally; medication to help that process along and allow for some control over timing; or a surgical procedure called a D&C. Each path is valid, and the decision belongs to the patient.

For most women experiencing a single miscarriage, Dr. Krohn is careful to offer a measured dose of reassurance: one loss does not dramatically increase the risk of another. The body heals faster than most people expect, and typically, women only need to wait about a month before trying again.

It's a different picture for those navigating recurrent pregnancy loss, which is defined as two consecutive losses — or three total. In those cases, Dr. Krohn and her colleagues pursue an extensive workup, examining uterine anatomy, thyroid function, clotting disorders, blood sugar levels, and chromosomal factors from both parents. In some situations, advances in reproductive technology even allow for chromosomal screening of embryos before implantation, giving families a meaningful path forward.

Certain medical conditions do raise the risk, and for women preparing for pregnancy, Dr. Krohn emphasizes the importance of preconception care, including ensuring immunity to infections like

chickenpox, rubella, and measles, all of which can contribute to loss.

But beyond the clinical picture, Dr. Krohn keeps coming back to something that can't be captured in a lab panel: the emotional weight of pregnancy loss, and how poorly equipped most people are to sit with someone else in it.

"People say things, not trying to be hurtful, but that are very hurtful," she says. "'Oh, you'll just get pregnant again.' Or someone asks when you're having kids, not knowing you've been through three losses."

She's seen miscarriages put strain on relationships, not because partners don't care, but because men and women often process grief so differently that they can feel like they're on entirely separate planets. Her advice to anyone supporting someone through a loss is simple: listen more than you speak, ask what they need rather than assuming, and resist the urge to offer silver linings.

"There's not one right way to deal with it," she says. For those who want support beyond their immediate circle, Monument Health's nurse practitioners maintain a running list of local counselors and therapists to help patients find the right fit without the overwhelm of starting from scratch.

And for women on the other side of loss, wondering whether they can bear to try again, Dr. Krohn offers the most honest answer there is: only you can know.

"Can I go through this again? Can my heart handle it?" she says. "They're the only ones that can answer that question for themselves."

What she wants every woman to carry with her is this: you didn't cause this. You are not alone.

.....

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
SUPPORTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS
THROUGH PREGNANCY LOSS, VISIT

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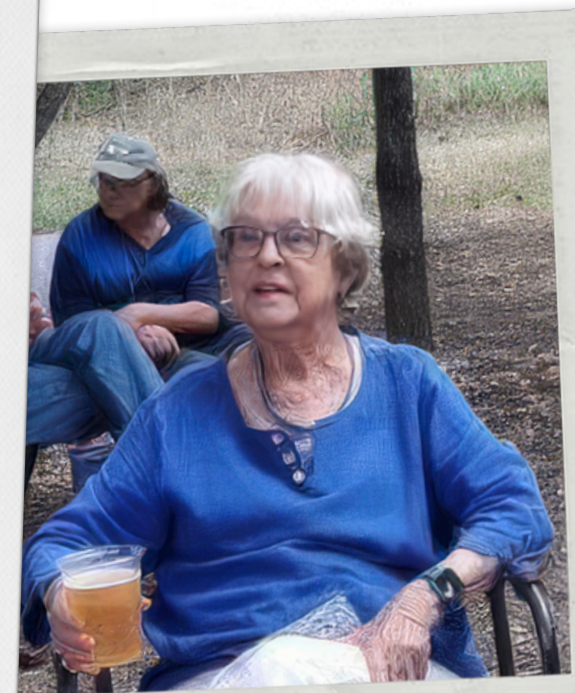
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if not us, WHO?

**HOW ROSALIE ASLESEN AND THE
SPEARFISH MUSEUM ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ARE GIVING LOCAL
STORIES A PLACE TO LIVE ON**

BY MIRANDA O'BRYAN HERTEL



Long before Rosalie Aslesen began working to preserve Spearfish history, she was living it.

Born in a house on Main Street in 1938, Rosalie remembers a Spearfish of just 3,500 people. She grew up on three acres with four sisters and four brothers and had a horse she rode everywhere, even through town. She called her childhood “perfect freedom.”

“I was fortunate to grow up in Spearfish when I did,” Rosalie said, reminiscing about her childhood.

Today, after living in Spearfish for 74 of her 88 years, Rosalie is working to make sure the stories that shaped her hometown have somewhere to live on.

The idea for a Spearfish museum began, fittingly, over tea.

Back in November 2024, Rosalie sat down with her childhood friend Johanna Meier DellaVecchia. For years, Johanna had searched for a way to preserve her family home and hoped it might eventually become a museum dedicated to Spearfish history. After other possibilities fell through, she was discouraged, but during that visit between two old friends, Rosalie offered a simple solution: Why not try to create the museum themselves?

“Little did two octogenarians know how difficult the challenge would be,” she mused.

What began as a conversation between two friends quickly grew. With guidance from the Black

“IF NOT US, WHO? IF NOT NOW, WHEN?”

Hills Area Community Foundation, Rosalie and Johanna began learning what it would take to establish a public nonprofit museum, gathering interested community members and completing the long list of tasks required to move the project forward. The Spearfish Museum Advisory Committee has since grown to 13 volunteers, each bringing their own skills and responsibilities.

But the work of building awareness didn't stop there. At the beginning of this year, Rosalie continued to give presentations to local service groups, inviting more people into the project.

For her, the reasoning is straightforward. “Spearfish needs a museum,” she said. “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

The committee's vision extends far beyond a building filled with artifacts.

“The Spearfish area is a unique fusion of rich history, prosperity, natural beauty, and bold personalities,” Rosalie said. “Its stories — past and present — deserve to be preserved and shared.”

The museum will guide visitors through Spearfish's story, beginning with the Indigenous people who first

called the area home and continuing through the arrival of miners and the town's early founders. Exhibits will then explore four major pillars of the community: mining, Black Hills State University, tourism, and the people who have shaped Spearfish across generations.

Designed with children, local residents, and visitors in mind, the museum aims to make history engaging and memorable for everyone.

One project is already underway: an oral history collection inviting longtime area families to record their stories. Someday, museum visitors will be able to press a button and hear Spearfish history told through the voices of the people who lived it.

Rosalie understands how powerful those personal memories can be. Her father was a history buff, and one of her clearest childhood memories is of watching him sit beside the radio and cry when news came that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died. It is the kind of moment that may never make it into an official history book, but can reveal what a time and place felt like to the

people living through it.

“The Spearfish Museum will work to be engaging, relevant, fresh, supported, beloved, and impossible to forget,” Rosalie said.

Turning that vision into reality, however, requires the community's support. With Johanna's home pledged to the museum, the committee is now working to raise \$250,000 to accept the property and begin the next steps, including architectural plans to remodel the existing space and connect it to an additional building. Their goal is to open the doors to the Spearfish Museum by 2030.

“We need the community to take ownership of this museum by making donations and volunteering to help,” she said. “Whatever they donate will be greatly appreciated because it indicates they believe in the project.” She added that volunteers are equally important as the committee continues to host events and build community support.

For Rosalie, that belief may be what preservation ultimately requires: people deciding the stories of the place they call home are worth carrying forward.

Someday, if Rosalie and the growing group

of volunteers behind the Spearfish Museum have their way, another child may walk through its doors and hear stories like hers, preserved in the voices of the people who lived them.

After nearly nine decades of watching her hometown make history, Rosalie Aslesen isn't finished making a little more of it herself.



a taste of fall

with Leones' Creamery

BY KRYSTAL BRESNAHAN



Two sisters started a unique, local ice cream shop in November 2014. It was sweater weather when the doors first opened at Spearfish's old City Hall building, introducing Leones' Creamery. Twelve years later, Rebecca and Hannah Leone reflect on the sweetness of starting something new while celebrating fall flavors in a second location in downtown Rapid City.

THE SWEETNESS OF *starting something new*

Churning ice cream into a career involved both happy coincidence and unwavering commitment for Rebecca and Hannah Leone — sisters and co-owners of Leones' Creamery in Spearfish and the new Rapid City Scoop Shop.

Hannah worked as a grocery store cashier in high school and later gained experience in bakeries and restaurants, which helped prepare her for day-to-day operations at the creamery. "It also spurred my love for experimentation and curiosity in the kitchen!" she says.

Before opening the creamery, Rebecca honed her customer service skills in a bakery and a variety of retail companies. She also had the pleasure of managing Dough Trader Pizza in Spearfish for a few years, which was both fun and challenging and gave her the confidence to attempt something of her own.

These innovative women believe the different experiences and strengths they each bring to the creamery benefit the business.

“We kept waiting for someone to open a handcrafted ice cream shop in Spearfish. The timing with other niche food and retail businesses opening in town just felt right,” the sisters explain. “We decided to look into what type of equipment would be required... and in the process, we discovered a gentleman who was retiring from the business and selling his entire operation in Missouri. Within a week, we had inspected the equipment and had it loaded on a U-Haul heading back to South Dakota.”

One of the biggest lessons they’ve learned is that who you surround yourself with makes all the difference. “When you have the right team around you, work becomes so much fun, regardless of how busy, slow or stressful the season is.”

Ready to Scoop & Serve
IN DOWNTOWN RAPID CITY

The Leone sisters were seeking a new challenge when the opportunity arrived to expand their business to Rapid City. “Our building was the first to be finished on the lot, so we were still surrounded by an active construction site when we opened. Our staff was eager to start, so we soft-launched and hit the ground running,” the sisters say.

While the “vibe” varies, Rebecca and Hannah aim for the same quality of product, service, and customer experience at both storefronts. The most important thing to know before you go is that the flavors are constantly changing. Ice creams scooped in Spearfish are often not the same as what’s available in Rapid City, so it’s best for guests to check the website before coming in.



“When you have the
right team around you,
WORK BECOMES
SO MUCH FUN,
regardless of how busy,
slow or stressful the
season is.”

“We prioritize training our staff to know our products well, including the ingredients, allergens, and pairings. Of course, our team is always happy to offer samples to help customers make up their minds (although that sometimes makes it harder!)”

Collaborations with local producers influence the availability of flavors, which feature ingredients grown right here in the Black Hills. “Being able to create something with like-minded businesses feels exceptionally rewarding. It’s one of the best parts of our job! We’re fortunate to be building a great team in Rapid City, and we’re looking forward to collaborating with local Rapid City businesses as we find our footing there.”

Fall in Love **WITH LEONES’**

Over the years, Hannah and Rebecca have learned that finding inspiration can be easy. “Some of our favorite foods translate really well as ice cream! We get inspiration from traveling, or a funky ingredient we learn about, or a vegetable or herb growing at Cycle Farm. Fun ingredients are literally all around us, so it’s often experimentation that helps us to find the right balance in ice cream.”

The biggest challenge is all the possibilities: “It’s difficult, because fall is such a short season, and there’s so much we want to make!”

Leones’ is churning up some favorite autumn standbys like Chai, Sweet Potato with Marshmallow Swirl, Apple Crisp, and Butterbeer, and new fall flavors are debuting soon!

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Does everyone pay the same?

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