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**Giving options on May 7:**
1. Online at GiveDeKalbCounty.org
2. In-person, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., at the DeKalb County Community Foundation (475 DeKalb Ave., Sycamore)
3. In-person, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., at the Sandwich Public Library (925 S. Main St., Sandwich)

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**May 7, 2020**

**GIVE DeKalb County**

**GiveDeKalbCounty.org**

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Saturday, March 28th, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Held throughout the DeKalb Public Library

You’re invited to our 3rd Annual World of Reading celebration! Drop by to explore non-fiction topics inspired by popular books. Visit a mini-petting zoo with mini-goats, a mini-pig, rabbits, ducks, and chickens, courtesy of Animal Express. Throughout the building we’ll have activities focusing on such themes as Sports, Art, Health & Wellness, and the Census. Replenish your energy with a cup of Gatorade after trying out various sports, learn how the digestive system works, draw Minecraft selfies, and more.

Enjoy a special performance at 1:00 p.m. in the lower level Yusunas meeting room. For further details, contact us at (815) 756-9568 ext. 3350 or visit dkpl.org.

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dkpl.org
From the time a baby is born through adolescence, the child goes through various stages of development to communicate its needs, feelings and emotions to its family and the world. And sometimes, this is naturally more difficult for some children than others. Luckily, there is a new resource now available in Sycamore to help families with young children work through emotional and behavioral concerns through the process of play therapy. Wellspring Center for Counseling, located on Edward Street across from Kindred Hospital, recently opened in November 2019 and offers individual, family and couples therapy. It has expanded to now offer play therapy for its youngest clients. Founded by Halie Howells, a licensed marriage and family therapist, Wellspring’s play therapy component was created to fill a need for children ages 3-12 who are dealing with emotional, social and behavior issues.

“We have offered play therapy services at our original Wellspring location in Elgin, and felt there was a gap in resources for families located further west from Chicago,” says Halie. “Sycamore was an obvious choice for us to open a location and offer our services because it is a special place for our family. It is my husband’s hometown, and we both had an interest in wanting to serve this community that means so much to us.”

Based on the concept that every child’s first language is play, play therapy has been researched and practiced for approximately 70 years. Using a unique approach that includes working with a child through arts and crafts, music, Play-Doh, drawings, pictures and imaginative play with real-life scenarios and toys, a therapist is able to help children re-enact events that have happened or express themselves in a constructive way. In Wellspring’s office, play therapy clients benefit from a space designed and set up like a play room that provides comfort and familiarity, and allows children to fully explore and immerse themselves in self-directed play.

“As a marriage and family therapist, I often see the implications of how parents’ relationships can affect the children in a family,” says Halie. “But parents don’t even need to be in therapy to suggest that their children could benefit from a professional. We are seeing a cultural shift where people are becoming more accepting of therapy, and we want to provide a place for them to turn to when their children begin presenting any type of issue.”

In fact, there are myriad reasons Halie lists for why a child may benefit from play therapy.
I became a marriage and family therapist as a former nanny, I’ve always believed we take a ‘systems approach’ when working with any client, young or old, in which we look at the whole family unit and not just the individual,” Haile says. “If a child is the presenting client, there will also be sessions with parents or guardians to discuss how their child is expressing emotions and how they can connect and help their child in moments of distress. We really want to help empower parents to look at the big picture.”

Wellspring offers two play therapists — Anna Thomas, ALMFT, and Tyler Mantansibawa, ALMFT — so children can have a choice of working with a male or female.

“As a former nanny, I’ve always believed that one of the most intimate places you can be invited into is a family’s home and dynamic,” says Anna. “I love the process of play therapy — the honesty, rawness, improvisation — and creating a story with a family to show them what change can look like. Playing is fun, and it’s exciting to see the possibilities when things are going well and even when they aren’t going well. But it’s hard work, and I have an immense sense of pride for the work my clients do.”

For Tyler, play therapy was an extension of why he got into the field of marriage and family therapy.

“It became a marriage and family therapist to help children and their families,” he says. “When kids are developing mentally at a young age, they don’t do well with talk therapy, so play therapy is a perfect starting point to help a child feel genuinely seen and understood by his or her parents. It’s exciting to see progress and growth with my clients, when the whole family has a breakthrough where parents are seeing something at home and understand why their child is acting out in a certain way.”

Wellspring offers consultations with parents interested in play therapy in which they can discuss their child’s needs and what issues should be addressed. Then, the parents will work with the therapist to create a customized “road map” and goals for the child. From there, the child will have his or her first session one on one with the therapist in Wellspring’s dedicated play therapy space. Wellspring also offers parent support groups and group sessions for children.

“There is no one-size-fits-all approach in play therapy, but when parents walk in the door, we want them to know they already have support for the work that needs to be done,” Anna says. “Your issue is not everyone else’s issue, but you’re not the only one going through this.”

While Wellspring is not the first center in the area to offer a play therapy program, it is the first to provide a designated space set up for child-led play and a program that will see children starting as young as 3.

Building relationships with the education system and community organizations is one goal that Wellspring is building upon as it launches its play therapy program. One organization, Basics DeKalb County, will come in and do more play with them,” says Haile. “There is a shift happening in how the school system is assessing children, and it has proven much more effective to put children in the 5 non-directed play environments, rather than having them sit directly with a counselor or therapist and try to talk about issues.”

Haile would like to expand her relationships with the DeKalb and Sycamore school districts, as well as local churches or other gathering places, to serve as a mental health first responder when large-scale adversities happen. “If we are at the beginning stages of launching our play therapy program, we hope to expand and provide education to teachers and youth leaders in the community, while providing families with accessible services,” she says. “When we can get kids on the right track, it can impact the rest of their lives. It is so powerful.”
Family Business HAS CHANGED WITH THE TIMES

As the owner of Banner Up in Sycamore, it’s Jon’s job to know all about signs. He was just 1 year old when his father, Ed, started the business. At the time, Banner Up’s focus was on making ... well, banners. But as businesses’ and consumers’ needs have changed over the years, Jon has expanded the business to include vinyl wraps for vehicles, monument signs, textured high-density urethane (HDU...foam) panels, light-emitting diode (LED) channel letters and cabinets, vinyl decals for windows and much more.

Just a few months ago, he started a new company, Dimensional Signage Resource (DSR), a wholesale source for computer numerical control (CNC) routed signs and substrates. Other companies contract with DSR when they need three-dimensional signs and/or substrates cut to unique shapes for their customers. “Most signs are uniquely shaped these days, rather than just being rectangles,” says Jon. “We now have the equipment in house that enables us to make those types of signs, thus allowing us to control quality and time. For example, cut-out logo/letters for the wall of your reception area (whether lit or unlit) are huge right now.”

Both Banner Up and DSR are locally based companies, with employees who all live within a 15-mile radius of the store. While Ed’s role is minimal with the company these days, he still lives a quarter-mile away and comes in the office every day to handle both businesses’ finances. He and Jon’s mom, Karen, will celebrate their 50th anniversary this year.

As Jon continues to build the Banner Up business and grow the fledgling DSR company, he’s grateful to live in a community that supports local business owners so wholeheartedly. “My dad, my employees and I all have a stake in the community and want to see it thriving,” says Jon.

To learn more about DSR, visit 3dsresource.com, and to learn more about Banner Up, visit bannerupsigns.com.

Driving across town, Jon Kuhn notices much more than your average motorist would: He sees the special care that each business took with creating its sign. And, even more than that, he observes the entire environment around a business’s sign and façade, distinctly aware of the effort it has made to create a specific atmosphere that will appeal to customers and clients.
All of us want to help the environment, and small changes to your daily routine can make a big difference.

For example, the use of one fabric bag can eliminate 783 plastic bags. A reusable bottle equals 83 plastic bottles saved. A metal straw can replace 295 plastic straws and help wildlife and our collective environment. And, of course, our favorite reusable coffee cup saves the world more than 1,256 plastic cups. While many of us have made the leap to bags, bottles, straws and cups, many people aren’t sure how much coffee to use, and often end up with a beverage that is too strong or weak.

Many coffee stores/roasters interested in the environment often offer special deals or K-Cups with purchase of coffee. COROCO Coffee Roaster Collective in Sycamore does, and it’s worth visiting our website to get some great beans and a free reusable stainless K-Cup at the same time with the discount code GREEN.

To use the stainless steel K-Cup replacement filter, you will need to know how to grind for your filter and how much coffee to use per cup. Grind your beans like you would for your automatic drip coffee filter, but just a little finer. Beware of going too fine, as you do not want to block the filter. With a ratio of about 2 tbsp. to a 6-ounce cup, your K-Cup should deliver a great cup of coffee.

Next, dark roasts often work better and deliver better flavor from K-Cups. Coroco Coffee sells a variety of dark roasts such as Interlude™ Espresso, which offers flavors of chocolate, almond, honey and berries, or Diner™’’I’ll Have The Usual,” a fresh, friendly, familiar dark roast. Propeller™ Dauntless blend is another customer favorite dark roast, which brings flavors of leather, baker’s chocolate and Brazil nut on the finish. Reusable K-Cups are also easy to clean: Just rinse out the grounds and place in the top rack of your dishwasher. They save money and allow you more coffee choices, too.

Taking the time to fill your reusable K-Cup is like picking up your water bottle, metal straw or fabric bag. The use of this eco-friendly product allows you to reduce your carbon footprint and freshly grind your coffee each day. A reusable K-Cup filter offers a solution to the trash left behind and saves you, the coffee drinker, money by using ground coffee with reusable cups instead of one-time K-pods. The environment will also benefit, because you will be able to compost coffee grounds and avoiding filling landfills with used K-Pods. Reusable K-Cups are a small change in routine with long-term positive effects.

How to Use

REUSABLE K-CUP FILTERS
(and Why You Should)

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Visit COROCO’s new blog for more information on coffee for good, coffee talk, process, and much more.

blog.corococoffee.com
Was your New Year’s resolution to lose some weight or maybe try to eat a little healthier? Perhaps you started a low-carb diet, but now that it’s February, you’ve lost a little bit of steam. I have a few recipes that can help you get back on track with your low-carb goals. Even if you don’t follow a low-carb lifestyle, these recipes are great additions to any meal and can help refresh some of your more tired meal rotations. Whether you need breakfast, lunch, or dinner ideas, I’ve got you covered with these recipes!

**BREAKFAST - EGG CUPS**

**Makes a dozen.** These egg cups are a great quick breakfast and you can customize them to your tastes!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID large eggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 tsp. pepper</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FILLING IDEAS**

- Mozzarella cheese
- Feta cheese
- Chopped spinach
- Cheddar cheese
- Ground beef or turkey

**ADDITIONAL SEASONINGS:**

- Italian blend, steak seasoning, smoke paprika, garlic powder, taco seasoning

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and line a muffin tin with silicone liners or spray with cooking spray.
2. Mix the eggs and salt and pepper together. Evenly distribute the eggs to the muffin tin. Do NOT fill all the way to the top — you need room for fillings.
3. Pick two or three fillings and add these to the eggs. Don’t overstuff — it won’t cook properly.
4. Bake for 12-15 minutes until the eggs are set.

**LUNCH - DELI LETTUCE WRAP**

**Makes one wrap.** If you’ve been craving a deli sandwich, then this recipe will hit the spot. Again, customize it with your favorite meats and cheeses!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 head of iceberg lettuce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 slices deli meat - such as turkey or ham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 slices of deli meat - such as prosciutto or salami</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 slices cheese - such as cheddar or provolone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliced tomato</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dill pickle spears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parchment paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Lay out a piece of parchment paper and place 5-8 leaves of lettuce in the center. You don’t want any gaps or spaces between the leaves.
2. Spread the mayo and mustard onto the leaves and then layer the meat and cheese. Finish with the tomatoes and pickles.
3. Start rolling the lettuce leaves from one edge; as you’re rolling, fold the ends in like you’re wrapping a burrito. Use the parchment paper as a base to keep things together, and when you get to the end, fold the parchment paper over the wrap to keep everything together.

**DINNER - ZUCCHINI ROLLS**

**Serves 2-3 people.** This simple play on lasagna is a fun dinner idea. Feel free to add ground meat if you want!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 medium zucchinis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 jar tomato sauce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 C cream cheese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 C ricotta cheese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. Italian seasoning blend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Trim the ends of the zucchinis and slice it lengthwise about 1/4 inch thick.
2. Place the zucchini slices in a single layer on the baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 10 minutes until the zucchini is soft.
3. While zucchini is baking, spread about half the tomato sauce on the bottom of an 8 x 10 casserole dish.
4. Let the zucchini cool and mix together the cream cheese and ricotta cheese. Spread about 1 tablespoon of cheese on a zucchini slice (add ground meat at this point if you wish) and then roll the zucchini. Stand the roll upright (so you can see the top of the swirl) in the casserole dish.
5. Once you’re done rolling all the zucchini, pour the rest of the sauce on top of the zucchini. Cover with aluminum foil and put it back in the oven for another 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake another 5 minutes.
CHIROPRACTOR HELPS YOU BATTLE PAIN

Don’t let the pain win. That’s sage advice from Dr. Ryan Friel, who is opening ProActive Chiropractic & Laser Center in Sycamore on March 23.

Chiropractic adjustment and treatment can often relieve pain when other medical interventions can’t.

“We’re typically a last line of defense,” says Dr. Friel. “People come to us when they’re hurting and need to restore function. They let a stiff neck or back linger a few weeks, when we could have found the root cause right at the beginning. They let pain win when they don’t need to.”

Finding that root cause early can speed your recovery and keep your body from starting to make modifications to ease the pain that will cause problems down the road. Dr. Friel encourages people to consider chiropractic procedures as a proactive, rather than reactive, response to pain and seek help sooner. Chiropractic procedures may help a problem before drugs or surgery. “I want patients to know that you always have options,” says Dr. Friel. “Chiropractic and conservative care have evolved and deserve a seat at the table when it comes to your medical decision-making.”

Dr. Friel’s patients have a wide range of ages and abilities. “I work with regular athletes and weekend warriors,” he says. “I’ve worked with people 90 years old. I adjusted my 1-year-old son when he was hours old.”

Dr. Friel has a comprehensive array of tools to help patients deal with aches, pains, and loss of mobility. Beyond the chiropractic tools for exercise and rehab (also offered at ProActive) is a Class IV Therapeutic Laser. “This state-of-the-art treatment is something everyone can benefit from,” he says. “It works great as a substitute for some surgical procedures, as well as a pre- and post-surgical treatment. This laser is used by all major professional sports to help athletes return to action sooner.”

Dr. Friel also employs a decompression table. “It helps to address disc injuries and severe cases of radiating pain, sciatica, numbness or tingling,” he says. “It takes pressure off the joint and provides a stretch that you can’t mimic yourself.”

Proactive Chiropractic & Laser Center has even more to offer. “I stay up to date and current on soft tissue work — cupping, different instrument-assisted tissue mobilization, and sports-specific massage,” says Dr. Friel.

“AFTER SEEING THE EFFECTS THAT A SPINAL FUSION SURGERY HAD ON MY DAD WHILE I WAS GROWING UP, I WANT TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO KEEP PEOPLE OFF THE SURGICAL TABLE.”

– DR. RYAN FRIEL

(This story was sponsored by ProActive Chiropractic & Laser Center)
The doctor, who is native to the Sycamore area, has returned from practicing in Florida where he worked with a wide range of patients, including Olympic equestrian riders (horse racing is prominent in Ocala, Florida). He and his wife Katelyn are high school sweethearts who met at Sycamore High School and are parents to 1-year-old Nathan.

It was during his high school years that Dr. Friel was inspired to become a chiropractor. "I'm 6-foot-7," he says. "Going into high school, I grew three inches in four or five months, so there were aches and pains. "When his family physician wasn't able to help ease the growing pains, a teenaged Dr. Friel went to see a chiropractor and found relief. "Ever since then, that compelled me to pursue this," he says.

After receiving a bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University, Dr. Friel graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Port Orange, Florida.

If you have pain, don't wait. Dr. Friel has "something for everyone."

ProActive Chiropractic & Laser Center will open Monday, March 23 at 2535 Bethany Road, Suite 100, Sycamore. For more information or to book an appointment at 815-517-0826 or visit, proactivechiroandlaser.com

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Doty & Sons is the perfect example of a business that has adapted its offerings to fit demand. When Cal Doty and his father, Lavern, started the business in 1948 with Cal’s discharge pay from the U.S. Army, they focused on pre-cast concrete steps. At the time, concrete steps were a popular replacement for wooden steps. Then, in the 1970s, outdoor décor moved away from concrete and toward pressure-treated wood, and Cal told his sons Tom and Sam (who were working for him by then) that they needed to find something new.
So, they started manufacturing products for cities—benches, garbage cans, planters and other decorative concrete products. The change in focus opened up countless opportunities for them and sustained the business for three more decades.

In 2009, the business received a call from a park district wanting to know if it could manufacture concrete cornhole boards. “At the time we didn’t make them,” says Sam. “But as soon as my brother hung up the phone, we immediately went to work on our very first concrete cornhole board. When I told my friends what we were doing, you could almost see the question mark appearing over their heads. But then I explained the market we were going after.”

The market, he told them, was park districts and other entities—such as correctional facilities—that were becoming increasingly interested in permanent outdoor games. In addition to cornhole boards, Doty & Sons began offering ladder toss games, outdoor ping pong tables, chess and checkers tables and, now, foosball tables.

In recent years, the company has been able to find new customers in campgrounds that want to offer permanent recreation facilities for campers, and in apartment complexes that are trying to make their properties more attractive to renters. Of course, the company is still making more standard concrete products as well, such as benches, tables, waste containers, memorial products and other items as requested by customers. A few years ago, Doty & Sons created an outdoor classroom for Sycamore High School.

Cal passed away four years ago, but his sons have grown the business to include 14 employees—including Sam’s son, Eric.

“Our business philosophy is to make top-quality products,” says Sam. “If you make top-quality products, then you should never have a problem selling.”

Tom, left, and Sam Doty.
**Life Hacks**

We can all use a little help with making life easier.
Here are some great tips and tricks for surviving the winter weather.

Ready to get away on a spring break vacation but worried about the cost of airline tickets?

**Hack:** Many travel sites attest that the day of the week on which you buy your ticket can affect the price you pay. One site, Cheap Air, recommends you buy your ticket on a Tuesday afternoon to find the lowest price. You can also use websites such as Kayak.com to set up fare forecast alerts that will let you know when the price drops on a specific flight you’re looking to book.

*Source: EliteDaily.com*

Leaving on an international trip but not sure what documentation you should prepare to have with you?

**Hack:** The U.S. Department of State recommends that travelers photocopy the information page of their passports before leaving on international trips. Take the copy of the passport with you, but do not store it in the same location as your passport. If you lose the document or someone steals it, obtaining a replacement will be considerably easier if you have the photocopy to prove your identity.

*Source: USA Today.com*

One way to quickly ruin a fun-in-the-sun spring break vacation? Sunburns.

**Hack:** If you forget to pack aloe vera, there are a couple other options to help soothe irritating and painful sunburns. You can try rubbing plain, unsweetened cold yogurt on the burn to provide quick relief. Another option is to ask your hotel lobby for some chamomile tea bags and chill them before you leave for the beach. When you return, apply the chilled bags to irritated areas to ease soreness and redness.

*Source: Biggietips.com*

Do you have a life hack you can’t live without?

Share it with us on our Facebook page, and your hack might be included in an upcoming issue!

*Facebook: InVironments Magazine*

**Heading out on a long spring break road trip with your entire family can make for great memories — and big messes in the car.**

**Hack:** One way to avoid permanently sticky cup holders from all those sodas, sports drinks and juices you and your kids might consume is to place silicone cupcake liners into the cup holders before your trip. They will catch not only liquids but also fast food crumbs that mysteriously seem to find their way to cup holders. After your trip, simply scrub the liners and reuse for your next trip.

*Source: Shopwithscrip.com*

After adding up the costs of airline tickets or gas to drive, accommodations and meals, there can often be little left in a vacation budget for siteseeing excursions and tours of your destination.

**Hack:** While asking locals for the best hidden gems and places to check out is an option, if you’re not keen on asking residents for advice, you can also turn to a variety of sources on the Internet for recommendations. There are several travel-related Instagram accounts and websites, such as Trip Advisor, where you can view tips and reviews from other travelers.

*Source: EliteDaily.com*

Feeling overwhelmed with all the car rental options and trying to find the best price for your spring break budget?

**Hack:** Register your car rental reservation with AutoSlash. This free website monitors coupons and discount codes from all the major rental companies to see if prices drop, then notifies you so you can rebook when the time is right.

*Source: TravelPulse.com*
On December 10, 2019, the Egyptian Theatre proudly celebrated 90 years of bringing live music, Broadway shows, community theater groups, classic film presentations and more to the community. To honor this milestone anniversary, the theatre launched a campaign to embark on its largest expansion project since it was first constructed in 1929.

“As we celebrate the past and look forward to the future, we are pleased to unveil our ‘Expanding Beyond 90 Years’ campaign to preserve, expand and honor the Egyptian Theatre’s place as a centerpiece of the community,” says Alex Nerad, executive director of the Egyptian Theatre.

The expansion marks the largest-scale project that has been undertaken at the theatre, with one important amenity at the center of it all: air conditioning. While air conditioning is a seemingly simple and modern convenience, it has continuously been placed on the back burner throughout the theatre’s history. During the original construction of the theatre in 1929, the stock market crash and subsequent Great Depression led to a hurried and scaled-back completion of the building. Due to limited funding, air conditioning was one item that was cut during construction. Then, in 1978, when the theatre had fallen into disrepair and was nearly condemned and scheduled for demolition, a group of concerned citizens created a non-profit organization that continues to own and operate the theatre today. While they were armed with a grant from the state of Illinois to restore the Egyptian in 1983 to its former glory, the funding still did not provide enough for air conditioning.

“The addition of air conditioning has been discussed over the last 10 years, and is necessary for a number of reasons,” Nerad says. “Not only will climate control help with the preservation of the theatre, but it will also open the door to year-round programming. The theatre currently serves more than 40,000 patrons a year and provides more than $2 million in direct economic impact to the community. As a prominent arts and entertainment center for the region, we see these numbers increasing with year-round operation.”

Understanding the significant need for air conditioning and the idea that it would transform the theatre into a year-round attraction, the City of DeKalb began working with the Egyptian to develop a plan for funding this much-needed improvement. The estimated budget for the project reached $5.5 million with the inclusion of the expanded square footage, air conditioning and amenity upgrades. After years of deliberation, community support began to swell for the Egyptian Theatre’s request of tax increment financing (TIF) dollars to make the necessary upgrades. The result was a $2.5 million commitment from the City of DeKalb through TIF funding.

On May 1, 2019, the Egyptian Theatre held a groundbreaking ceremony which also marked 90 years to the day from when construction began on the theatre back in 1929. The non-profit organization that owns and operates the historic theatre also launched its “Expanding Beyond 90 Years” campaign to fund the project. While the theatre has undergone
restorations and improvements over the years, this project will include a two-story addition located off the south side of the lobby, with a special focus on priority patron amenities and the installation of air conditioning.

With an estimated completion date of summer 2020, patrons can expect to see a variety of changes by the spring season at the theatre. The project will include increasing the size of the first- and second-floor public restrooms and concession stands, as well as implementing American Disabilities Act accessibility, to accommodate larger audiences more comfortably and efficiently.

"One of the major goals we set during the construction was to not disrupt or displace any of the programming," Nerad says. "We have more than 25 different community groups that use the Egyptian Theatre every year, and we want to make sure everyone is accommodated. Our patrons won’t miss any programs, but they may see some dust as the project progresses."

While the construction work is in the hands of Irving Construction — the original general contractor for the building’s restoration project in 1983 — the public can obtain a sneak peek of what is to come by attending one of the theatre’s “Hard Hat Tours.” Offered every Tuesday at 5:30 pm, this free, one-hour tour is led by Egyptian Theatre employees and gives a glimpse into the expansion progress week by week. The tours can accommodate any size group and are scheduled to continue until the end of April.

In addition, in celebration of its 90th anniversary and the expansion project, the theatre is currently offering a monthly 35MM classic film series, where patrons can see some of the most well-known films from the past 90 years. The special film series is presented on 35MM film on carbon-arc projectors, just as it would have been shown when the films from this era premiered. Attendees are enjoying films such as “The Wizard of Oz,” “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “E.T.,” “It’s a Wonderful Life,” “Casablanca,” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” “Gone With the Wind,” “The Sound of Music” and “Raiders of the Lost Ark” through May 2020.

And by spring, the Egyptian Theatre will be ready to celebrate.

“We will certainly have a celebration to thank the community for their support,” Nerad says. “We have currently raised $4 million through state grants, public and private donors and fundraising. To show our appreciation to the City of DeKalb, the community and all donors, we will be creating a special wall in the lobby that will highlight those individuals and organizations that made this expansion project possible.”

To learn more or donate to the Egyptian Theatre’s “Expanding Beyond 90 Years” campaign, please visit lightscameradonate.org.
Each year in early May, members of the Miller family join their neighbors for breakfast, then head over to the DeKalb County Community Foundation before school to donate money for Give DeKalb County. The tradition has become a special time for all of them — Kristin, her husband Scott, and their three teen and tween boys. The boys put away some of their allowance for charity, their parents match their donations, and they each pick a recipient for their hard-earned money. “It’s turned into something they get excited about,” says Kristin. “They spend months deciding who they’re going to support.”

Support Your Favorite Nonprofit During GIVE DEKALB COUNTY

The Millers aren’t the only ones looking forward to this year’s Give DeKalb County on May 7. Since 2014, the Community Foundation has hosted the 24-hour giving day to support nonprofits in DeKalb County. Donors can give online at givedekalbcounty.org from midnight to midnight on the 7th, or they can show up in person between 8 am and 8 pm at the Community Foundation’s headquarters, 475 DeKalb Avenue in Sycamore. New this year, in-person donations are also accepted at the Sandwich Public Library from 11 am to 1 pm.

In 2019, 104 nonprofit organizations participated in the event, bringing in more than $751,000 together. Not only is the day the biggest fundraising push of the year for many of the organizations, but it’s also a priceless opportunity to spread the word about their important work. There’s a competition aspect, as well: In addition to the funds designated for specific charities, the Community Foundation has a bonus pool of funds that are allocated based on how much of the total each organization raises. For example, an organization that raised 5 percent of the grand total would receive 5 percent of the bonus funds. In this regard, no gift is too small — donations of all sizes are greatly appreciated!

“There’s really a buzz here on the giving day,” says Ben Bingle, director of the DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership, a program of the Community Foundation. “It’s easy to get caught up in the excitement, and we’ve had donors share with us that Give DeKalb County is their favorite day of the year. It’s a fun way to give generously and also to learn about the important work carried out by local nonprofit organizations.”

Prior to the event, the Community Foundation offers training for the nonprofits to help them prepare. The goal is to give each organization the tools they need to be successful on the big day. Last year, donors from 43 different states and four countries around the world donated for Give DeKalb County. “There are so many people who get involved,” says Ben. “We welcome donors of all ages, and donations both large and small. Everyone can make a difference during Give DeKalb County.”

There are so many people who get involved. Everyone can make a difference during Give DeKalb County.”
- BEN BINGLE,
Director of the DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership
This summer, Sycamore Community School District 427 will experience its biggest transition in eight years: Superintendent Kathy Countryman is retiring and new Superintendent Steve Wilder will be taking her place. We spoke to both of them about how this next step will be impacting both their lives and the lives of students who go to school here.
A Love for Educating Children

When Wilder first started college he thought he wanted to be a scientist, so he majored in chemistry. But, as the years went by, he realized he loved working with children and switched his major to education. His first job out of college was teaching 8th grade science at a small school in central Illinois, Olympia Middle School. Soon, he moved into administration as principal of the school, then took an administrative position at University High School in Normal, Illinois. Most recently, he served as superintendent of Knoxville Community Unit School District 202 in Illinois.

He was drawn to the position in Sycamore, he says, because the school district is already doing so well. "It’s an opportunity where I don’t have to come in and address any major challenges," he says. "I can really focus on building relationships and my network both inside and outside the school district."

Wilder and his wife, Michelle, and four children have had several chances to visit Sycamore during the interview process and since he was selected. They have appreciated the warm welcome they received in town, he says. “It seems like everywhere we go, people are really glad to have us here,” he says.

He's a big exercise aficionado and has already had the opportunity to work out at the Kishwaukee Family YMCA (he's a member of the Y in Knoxville) He and his family are also looking forward to visiting local churches and finding somewhere local to worship after he starts his new job July 1.

"Sycamore is already a wonderful school district, and I plan to spend my first months doing a lot of observations and continuing that great work," he says.

In a personal level, education has had a significant impact on Countryman's life: Her husband, Curt, is a retired teacher; her daughter, daughter-in-law and son-in-law are teachers; and her granddaughter is a principal. Her grandchildren go to school in Sycamore, and she's looking forward to spending more time with them and her husband.

"I feel like we've done some really good work here in Sycamore," says Countryman, whose last day is June 30. "I feel lucky to have had this experience."

A Lasting Legacy

Countryman came to Sycamore schools 20 years ago as the principal at Southeast Elementary School. She became an assistant superintendent for human resources, and then was appointed superintendent eight years ago.

While Sycamore District 427 has accomplished many things in the time since Countryman took the helm, she says, she’s most proud of its main product — its students. “It’s my belief that we don’t have to tell our story, because our kids do — not only through words, but also through actions,” she says. “When our students are here, they work so hard to learn everything they can, and when they leave, they are a true testament to our district.”

Staff members and teachers, too, have made an incredible impact through their willingness to see outside the box, she says. “Our staff has done a good job of honoring the core curriculum while also creating authentic experiences outside the curriculum,” she says.

Countryman says she has appreciated the support of the community throughout her tenure in the district. “Our whole community is proud of our kids, and it wants them to engage in the community throughout her tenure in the district. “Our whole community is proud of our kids, and it wants them to engage in the community,” she says. “We have been able to build many of our programs based on relationships with our community partners.”

On a personal level, education has had a significant impact on Countryman’s life: Her husband, Curt, is a retired teacher; her daughter, daughter-in-law and son-in-law are teachers; and her granddaughter is a principal. Her grandchildren go to school in Sycamore, and she's looking forward to spending more time with them and her husband.

"I feel like we've done some really good work here in Sycamore," says Countryman, whose last day is June 30. "I feel lucky to have had this experience."

You can step out from a downward turn in weather to be refreshed with abundant greenery from Blumen Gardens. Spruce up your yard with Blumen’s award-winning landscape design featuring a large selection of plants. You may even want to brighten up your home with fresh-cut flowers from Kar-Re Flowers. Kar-Re offer an array of different types of flowers with the most distinctive colors.

Spring is also a time for being pampered in preparation for the summertime, and Sycamore has a variety of salons and spas from which to choose. These include Dolce Vita, a full-service salon and day spa for the whole family; and Luxe Salon, which is dedicated to providing a memorable experience for each guest.

Shopping in Sycamore is another great way to get out and enjoy spring. Roots is a great place to find home goods to freshen up the inside of your home. Add a vintage feel to the interior of your home with merchandise from Whimsical Perspective of Sycamore Antiques.

Then, stop by Prairie on State Winery for a glass of its spring rosé or sweet Moscato! Or, sip your way to The Forge of Sycamore for a wide selection of its very own craft beers and specialty brick-oven pizzas.

You need locally. Spending locally not only supports your friends and neighbors who run the businesses that make our communities unique, but it also supports the critical public services that keep us safe and uphold our quality of life.
Valentina Bauer and her Sycamore host family, the Theriaults, spend a lot of time talking about food. The 16-year-old from Argentina marvels at the vast amount of pre-packaged food here, the options for hot lunch at school and the use of eggs for breakfast. And her hosts delight in sharing stories and learning more about this girl they have come to care for deeply, even though they’ve only known her six weeks.

International Program has Changed Lives

Valentina Bauer and her Sycamore host family, the Theriaults, spend a lot of time talking about food. The 16-year-old from Argentina marvels at the vast amount of pre-packaged food here, the options for hot lunch at school and the use of eggs for breakfast. And her hosts delight in sharing stories and learning more about this girl they have come to care for deeply, even though they’ve only known her six weeks.
That’s the beauty and magic of the Rotary Club of Sycamore’s student exchange program with Santa Rosa, Argentina — not only do families experience the pleasure of hosting a student themselves for six weeks, but they also have the option of sending their own teenager to Argentina for another six weeks. “It has just been the best experience,” says Jenny Theriault.

A Sisterhood of Schools

The Rotary program began in 2013, but the idea took root back in 1981, when Argentinian Guillermo Samuel Salas graduated from Sycamore High School (SHS) as an American Field Service (AFS) exchange student. He developed lasting bonds with his host family and other students, and when he was attending an SHS reunion in 2011, he started talking with Principal Tim Carlson (a fellow Rotarian) about forming a reciprocal exchange program. They drafted a Sisterhood of Schools Project between the Rotary Clubs in the United States and Argentina, and the rest is history. “The experience I had in the United States clearly showed me the benefits of learning from other cultures,” says Guillermo.

Under the short-term exchange, students from Argentina come to the United States for six weeks in January and February — their summer break. Then, students from Sycamore visit Argentina in June and July. In many cases, the families who hosted the Argentinians send their own teenager to stay with the family of their exchange student.

The Theriaults love having Valentina in their house, and they’ve gotten to know the other Argentinian students as they’ve hosted get-togethers for the young people at their house. They’ve especially loved watching the students interact amongst themselves — for example, teaching each other how to greet with a handshake as the Americans do. “It helps you see your own world in a different way,” says Jenny.

In just a short time, the Theriaults have become very close with Valentina. Katie Theriault, who’s a junior at SHS, says it’s like she has a built-in best friend, and Valentina has appreciated their support as she has adjusted to all the cultural differences. “When I came here, I only knew a few things about the family,” she says. “Now I feel like I have been with them for a year.”

In June, Katie will stay with Valentina and her family in Santa Rosa for six weeks, attending school with her and the other exchange students she’s come to know. Valentina has made sure to prepare Katie for the experience, introducing her to her family and friends via Skype.

Lifelong Friends

For the students who have participated in the exchange, it’s been a life-changing experience. Mark Stice, now 24, was part of the first group of students to travel to Argentina in 2013. As a result of that trip, he became a Spanish major in college, and now he works as an accountant in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He stayed in contact with the two students from Argentina who came to Sycamore, and since then, they have visited each other and traveled together. “It was incredible,” he says.

The number of participants has fluctuated over the year, but Guillermo and the Rotary Club of Sycamore try to keep it as even as possible between the two countries. In January, six Argentinian students traveled to Sycamore, and in June, four or five students from Sycamore will be visiting Argentina.

The Rotary Club of Sycamore’s Youth Exchange Committee is now accepting applications for students to participate in next year’s exchange. Ideally, the students will be high school juniors who are willing to host an Argentinian as well as travel to South America, but they can discuss specific details with members of the committee. “Rotary International’s exchange program is one of the best in the world, and we would love to find more students who want to take advantage of it,” says Jeff Jacobson, a member of the committee.

For more information, contact Jeff at jeff@jacobsonandassoc.com.
Encouraging kids to try new foods can be a challenge, but parents have a helpful new sidekick in the form of a hot dog hero to encourage new culinary experiences. This is a humorous children's book that follows the adventures of a hot dog and his mustard dollop friend as they portray ordinary kids by day and crime-fighting heroes by night.

How did the idea for this book come about?

SM: When I was in my early 20s I worked at a gas station, and one of my duties was “Brew Master,” which meant I handled the coffee and its sales. In return, if sales were good, I would receive a small bonus.

One day, my manager joked that if they offered the same employee bonus for hot dog sales, she would be the “Hot Dog Master” and become rich, because we sold so many hot dogs daily. That got me thinking, what if there was a mascot for the hot dog and condiment station? What if there was a hot dog hero who encouraged kids to try new foods by introducing them to items they may not have heard of before?

From there, the idea of Frank E. Furtor and his mustard dollop friend, Mussy, was born. They are ordinary kids by day, but fight crime as The Furtanator and The Yellow Avenger by night. In this book, they are thwarting the plans of Captain Von Kraut and his assistant, Pickle Relish.

What is the main message you want readers to take from this book?

SM: I would like to encourage kids to try new foods. The villains in the book are Captain Von Kraut (sauerkraut), his assistant, Pickle Relish, and the spy, “D” Jon (brown mustard). My hope is that kids will become familiar with foods they might not have heard of before and become encouraged to “fight crime, one fruit or vegetable at a time.”

And while Frank E. and Mussy are middle school students, the pictures and words are simple enough for fourth grade children and up. It also makes me laugh, so adults might enjoy reading it to younger kids as well!

What was your experience writing and publishing this book?

SM: This is the first book that I have written, and I had the idea and developed it for several years before I gathered the courage to make it into a book.

However, the process of publishing took less than a year. I published the book with a self-publishing company and was very surprised at the amount of expertise you need to have or hire to make a book successfully. If I had searched for a traditional publishing company, they probably would have taken care of most of the details, but I likely would have taken a little longer to find the right fit. The self-publishing company that I used, Xlibris, was fast and efficient, and they have different people who work with you in the various facets of the process. But there were aspects — such as advertising that I thought I would be able to easily handle on my own, but was mistaken.

There are connections and techniques that someone who has been in the business a while knows that I haven’t even begun to imagine.

Do you have plans to write more books?

SM: I have a plan for another adventure for Frank E. and Mussy, as well as a rough draft for a young adult novel about twin princesses. Now that my children are older, I can put more focus on making these dreams a reality.

“The Adventures of Frank E. Furtor: Welcome to Foodville” is currently available on Amazon.com, xlibris.com and in-store at Made Just For You Gifts in Sycamore.

InVironments DeKalb is introducing a new InAuthors section. If you’d like to nominate a local author or illustrator for the Apr/May issue, contact us at info@inenvironmentsmag.com by Mar 13.
**A TOUCH OF SPRING**

with Ashley Murcia

Ashley Murcia is the owner/designer of re-nest studio, a customized home décor and personalized party décor Etsy boutique based in DeKalb. In addition to creating unique home and party décor, Ashley also shares her work, DIY tutorials, and life stories as a mother on her blog.

**RENESTSTUDIO.COM**

I don’t know about you, but this winter has felt pretty long. We’ve escaped the bitter cold and tons of snow this year, but when there are lots of grey days, the wishes for sunshine and spring weather come pretty often!

When the birds start chirping again, you can welcome them back with my Cookie Cutter Bird Seed Feeders! They’re an easy craft project to do with kids to help get everyone in the springtime mood!

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**Cookie Cutter Bird Seed Feeders**

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

- 3-4 cookie cutters (simple shapes that are at least 2” work best)
- Large bowl
- Spoon/spatula
- Measuring spoon (1 tbsp.)
- Measuring cup (1 cup)
- Corn syrup
- Unflavored gelatin (2 packets)
- Bird seed (at least 2-1/2 cups)
- Water
- Drinking straws, cut into 4” sections
- Scissors
- Cutting board
- Twine

---

1. Prepare the unflavored gelatin with ½ cup of boiling water; stir and add in ½ cup of cold water. Stir well and add 2 tbsp. corn syrup, mixing well.

2. After the gelatin and corn syrup are mixed, add in 2-1/2 cups of bird seed, stirring well. Once the mixture is set, place the bowl in the refrigerator for at least 10 minutes to allow the gelatin to set. (Note: If the mixture is still watery after 10 minutes, stir it again and place back in the refrigerator for another 5 minutes.)

3. Place your cookie cutters flat on the cutting boards and begin to spoon the bird seed mixture into them, packing the bird seed down well. Fill the entire height of the cookie cutter with bird seed. Continue to fill up all the cookie cutters.

4. Place one of the pieces of drinking straw into the bird seed. This will create the hole for you to string the twine through once your bird seed shapes are set.

5. Place your cutting board with the cookie cutters on it in the freezer for at least six hours (or overnight, if possible).

6. After the bird seed shapes have set in the freezer, remove the straw and gently press the shape out of the cookie cutter. Finish off your Cookie Cutter Bird Seed Feeder with a piece of twine to hang it from your favorite tree!
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Calendar of EVENTS

Mar

18 LIT & FIT
7-9PM
At this evening of exercise for the mind and body, participants will read and discuss popular titles each month, followed by a 45-minute walk around the Sycamore Park District’s new indoor track at the Park District Community Center. For more information, visit sycamoreparkdistrict.com.

23 PRESchool PICASSO
11AM-12PM
Kids ages 3-5 will enjoy hands-on arts and crafts that will develop vocabulary and fine motor skills at the Sycamore Public Library. For more information, visit sycamorelibrary.org.

28 WORLD OF READING
10AM-1PM
Come celebrate the third annual World of Reading extravaganza! Drop in any time and enjoy a host of activities! This event is free and open to all. No registration is required. For additional information, please contact Theresa at tharesaw@dkpl.org or at (815) 756-9568 ext. 3350.

Apr

8 TASTE OF SPRING
4-8PM
Experience an evening dedicated to the finer things in life at the 11th Annual Taste of Spring in downtown Sycamore. Enjoy desserts and wine tastings that will be professionally paired with a food course. For more information, visit discoversycamore.com.

9 TWEEN FLASHLIGHT EGG HUNT
6-9PM
Bring your flashlight to search for eggs, candy, and prizes, then enjoy a live DJ, games and activities inside the Sycamore Park District Community Center. For more information, visit sycamoreparkdistrict.com.

11 EGG HUNT
10AM
The Bunny will be hopping over to the Good Tymes Shelter at the Sycamore Park District Sports Complex for a free, fun and festive egg hunt sponsored by the Sycamore Police Department. For more information, visit sycamoreparkdistrict.com.

18 RUSSELL HUSTLE 5K TRAIL RUN/2K FUN RUN
10AM

19 HEALTHY KIDS RUNNING SERIES
3PM
This nationwide community running program for kids ages 2-14 provides a fun, five-week running event series from April 19-May 17 at the Sycamore Park District Community Center. For more information and to register, visit sycamoreparkdistrict.com or runsgroup.com/Race/4275.HR/Kids/Sycamore.

23-26 "FROZEN JR."
The Children’s Community Theatre presents Disney’s “Frozen Jr.,” based on the 2018 Broadway musical, and brings Elsa, Anna, and the magical land of Arendelle to life onstage at the Egyptian Theatre in DeKalb. For more information, visit yogiplaytheatre.org or call (815) 758-1215.

25 ELLWOOD HOUSE MUSEUM PRESENTS: “AGAINST THE GRAIN: A SPEAKEASY CHALLENGE”
5-9PM
In celebration of the 100th anniversary of prohibition, participants will solve prohibition-themed puzzles on the first floor of the Ellwood House Museum in DeKalb to reveal a secret passcode and gain entry to a basement-level speakeasy with live entertainment and authentic cocktails. For more information, visit against-the-grain.eventbrite.com.

May

1 DEKALB EDUCATION FOUNDATION COMMEMORATION
4PM
Join us for DeKalb Education Foundation’s commemoration. For more information, visit dekalbeducationfoundation.org.

2 DOAT YOGA
2-3P
A fun way to support Live Learn and Lead vocational farm is to join us! This non-profit organization aims to provide a holistic approach to solving some of society’s biggest challenges. Attending this class is a great way to let go of the stresses of the day. For more information, contact samantha@dkpl.org or at (815) 756-9568 ext. 1701.

2 SPRINGTIME IN VIENNA
7:30PM
The Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra will perform The Blue Danube Waltz. Op. 314, by Johann Strauss II, and Symphony No. 5, by Gustav Mahler, at the NIU Boutell Memorial Concert Hall in DeKalb. For more information, visit kishorchestra.org.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May

3 CINCO DE MAYO FESTIVAL
A Cinco de Mayo festival with live bands, dancing, a margarita bar, beer garden and authentic Mexican food will be held on Bill Johnson Boulevard behind the Taxco Restaurant in Sycamore. For more information, visit sycamorecinodemayo.org.

3 "ROY ORBISON & THE EVERLY BROTHERS REMASTERED"
4PM "Orbison & The Everly Bros. Reimagined" combines one of the most famous male duos of the 50s and 60s with one of the most iconic voices of all time for an unforgettable night of career-spanning hits at the Egyptian Theatre in DeKalb. For more information, visit egyptiantheatre.org or call (815) 758-1215.

4 HOMESCHOOL HAPPENINGS: GARDEN PICNIC
10AM Join the Sycamore Public Library for an end-of-year picnic with stories, crafts, songs and planting seeds. For more information, visit sycamorelibrary.org.

4 R.E.A.C.H.
1PM Join the Sycamore Public Library for a new program, R.E.A.C.H – Read, Explore, Achieve, Create, and Honor! This program is geared toward differently abled adults who would like a safe space to socialize with crafts, adult story time, videos, and film discussions. For more information, visit sycamorelibrary.org.

15 EGYPTIAN THEATRE FLASHLIGHT TOUR
8PM Join Egyptian Theatre staff as they provide a behind-the-scenes tour of the historic Egyptian Theatre in DeKalb using just your flashlights. For more information, visit egyptiantheatre.org or call (815) 758-1215.

RUSSELL HUSTLE
5K TRAIL RUN & 2K FUN RUN
SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020 | RUSSELL WOODS, GENOA, IL
5k AT 10am & 2k IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING 5k (11am)
REGISTER BY 3/23 FOR GUARANTEED T-SHIRT.

5K $25/$30 AFTER 3/31 | 2K $15/$20 AFTER 3/31

Family friendly event! 5K Trail Run & 2K Fun Run through Russell Woods Forest Preserve and Genoa Park District prairie/woods. All proceeds will go to St. Mary School in Sycamore for the school scholarship fund.

For further information please contact:
Chris Collins 815-751-5865 nomocamo70@gmail.com

DEKALB EDUCATION FOUNDATION
DEKALBEDUCATIONFOUNDATION.ORG
ORDER BY APRIL 17 FOR BOOK TO BE INSTALLED BEFORE THE MAY 1 COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

LEAVE A LEGACY.

Recognize a Graduate, Teacher, or Friend
Support District #428 teachers and students by sponsoring a “book” in the DEF Legacy Library outside the DeKalb High School.

DeKalb Education Foundation has donated over $500,000 to support programs like STEAM, literacy, music, automotive and the arts.

Items for the May/June Issue (covering May 15 to July 15) must be submitted by April 10 online at: invironmentsmag.com/submit-event

SEE DETAILS AT:

Invironmentsmag.com/submit-event

Share Your Great Ideas

Send your story ideas to us, and who knows, you could be famous!
At Meyers Furniture, we pride ourselves on providing a friendly and relaxing shopping experience. Feel free to browse our showroom on your own, or if you would like help, our design specialists with over 110 combined years of experience can be of service.

ALL MAJOR MANUFACTURERS!

$50 OFF YOUR PURCHASE.
*With purchase of $399 or more. Offer good till May 15, 2020.

OUR PACKED SHOWROOM MEANS GREAT DEALS FOR YOUR FAMILY

MATTRESSES STARTING AT $99*

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