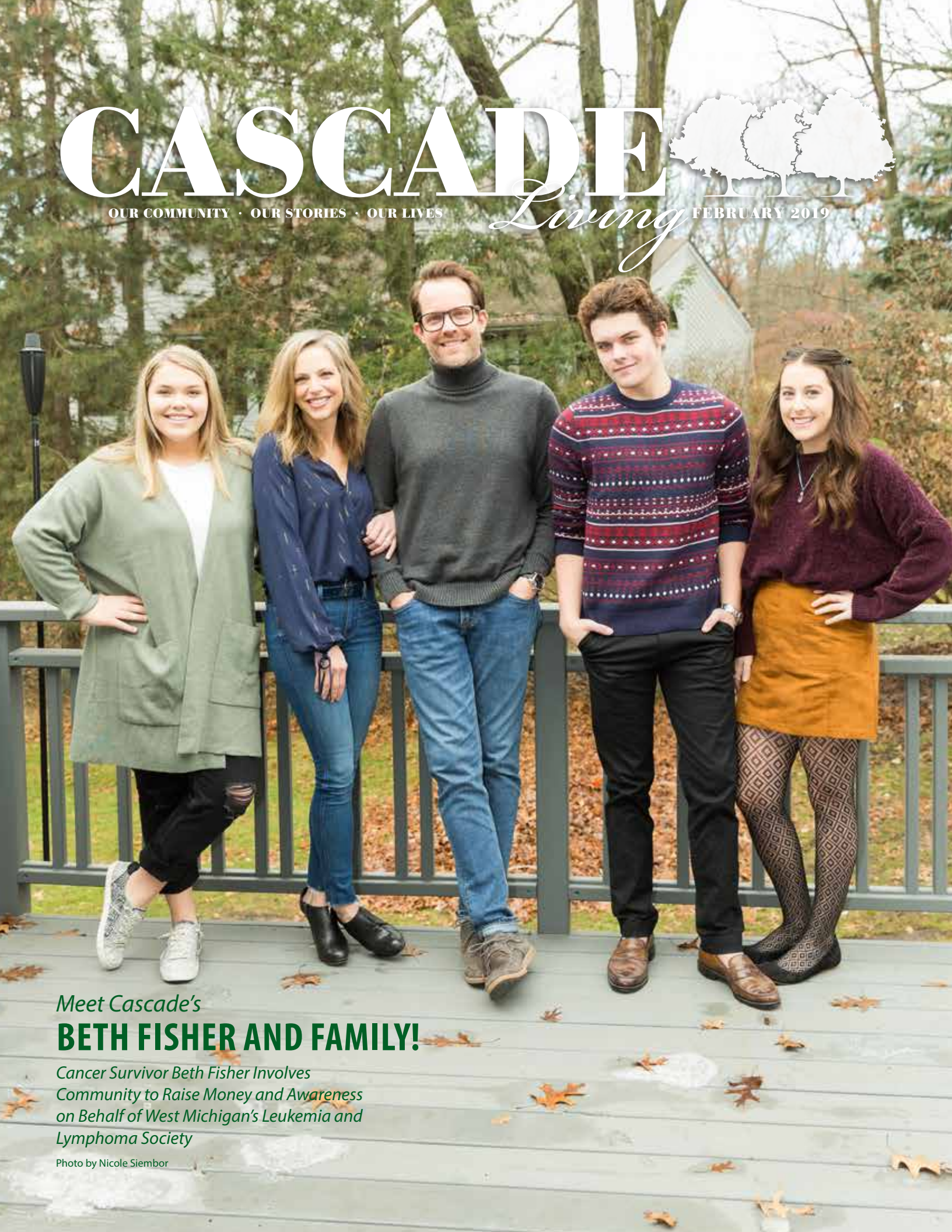


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FEBRUARY 2019



## Meet Cascade's **BETH FISHER AND FAMILY!**

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Photo by Nicole Siembor

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Mark Your calendar for an event at **Vitales of Ada** on **April 15**. Details in next month's issue.

We completed our fourth year of the Family Cook-Off. My daughter, Libby, and her husband, Nathan, won best overall for the 2018 competition.



# tradition!

editor's notes

The Hunt Family Cook-Off is a holiday tradition that Tom and I initiated a little late in the parenting game. Our first cook-off took place in 2015. The kids were 24, 21 and 18, respectively, and two of the three had significant others in their lives who have since officially joined the family. If your family is into cooking (or at the very least, into judging one another) this may be something to consider. Teams were formed and courses were judged and rewarded based on creativity, presentation, taste, and of course, quality of clean up. This past year each team selected a country or region and provided sample-sized portions that included appetizers, main courses, desserts and signature drinks. Winners received gift cards to fun local restaurants, but the main prize was bragging rights that carry until the next year.

If grandchildren (or even granddogs, for crying out loud!) were to ever enter the picture, the cook-off may very well fall by the wayside. Whether it stays or goes, it's one of those things that will be talked about for years to come. As we approach Valentine's Day, awkwardly and beautifully placed right in the middle of winter when we need it most, I encourage you to do something that might be remembered by the people you love and even worth repeating in the future. A little tradition never hurt anyone.



**Leigh Hunt**  
 Cascade Living Editor  
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 Leigh.hunt@n2pub.com

making a difference

# Cascade Mom SURVIVES CANCER

## and Now Works to Help Others Do the Same

Photos by Nicole Siembor

We all know the words no one ever wants to hear: “You have cancer.” But what do you do upon hearing them? What can you do even if you never have?

Beth Fisher was 25 when those words were first whispered to her. A new mom to her then not quite 2-year-old daughter, Olivia, she sat down to a dial-up internet connection to search “leukemia.” Her oncologist confirmed there was no cure. The only course of action would be a Bone Marrow Transplant, but the odds of survival were grim.

Twenty years later, Beth remains both cancer-free and an active volunteer with The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). Before moving to Grand Rapids in 2016, she and Olivia lived in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for 17 years. It was there that not only Beth met her husband, Ryan, but the local LLS Chapter approached her to run for “Woman of the Year.” Having never heard of the nationwide



Beth's daughter, Olivia, was not quite 2 years old when her mom was diagnosed with leukemia. Beth has worked tirelessly with LLS whose mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. As Beth can attest, that mission has allowed her to see her daughter grow up.

Man and Woman of the Year (MWOY) campaign, Beth quickly researched it and almost as quickly realized she could not say no.

Today, Beth is the local Chair of the MWOY campaign for West Michigan. Man and Woman of the Year is an elite 10-week philanthropic campaign to raise money on behalf of LLS, who is at the forefront of the fight to cure cancer. LLS is the largest funder of cutting-edge research to advance cures not only for blood cancers, but all cancers. More than 1.2 billion has been invested in research by LLS, including breakthroughs in immunotherapy, genomics and personalized medicine. **This research is saving lives!** Revolutionary new treatments originally discovered through blood cancer research are now being tested in clinical trials for other cancers.

In an effort to fund this pivotal research, hundreds of men and women in cities across America participate in MWOY. As part of an exclusive nomination process, local leaders, those who have been affected by cancer, or people who have a heart and penchant for the greater good are contacted by members of the local West Michigan LLS Leadership Team. Upon acceptance of the nomination, candidates begin fundraising. In MWOY, every dollar counts as one vote. The male and female candidate with the most votes are named the local Chapter's Man and Woman of the Year, and their totals are then considered for the National Title. Additionally, candidates who raise \$50,000 or more qualify for a research naming rights opportunity.

The 10-week campaign kicks off every year in late February and culminates with a black tie optional Grand Finale Gala. This year's event will take place May 9 in at the JW Marriott Ballroom at 6 p.m. Guests can purchase tickets to the event to support their candidate and participate in the live and silent auctions.



The Fisher family lives in Cascade's Beard Farm neighborhood.



Peyton Fisher (16), Chase Fisher (18) and Olivia Ours (22)



Ryan and Beth Fisher met in Fort Wayne, IN, where Beth was first approached by the local LLS Chapter to run for “Woman of the Year.” Today, Beth is the local Chair of the MWOY campaign for West Michigan. Man and Woman of the Year is an elite 10-week philanthropic campaign to raise money on behalf of LLS, who is at the forefront of the fight to cure cancer.

At the event's close, the winners are announced, as well as the total amount raised over the 10- week campaign. The first local MWOY campaign was in 2015. Thanks to the efforts of the local West Michigan Chapter over the last five years, Grand Rapids is now on the map across the country. Not only are more and more exceptional leaders signing on to compete, but there is also active research being done right here at Van Andel Institute.

The nomination process happens yearly, beginning in August. **Nominations for this year's 2019 West MI Man and Woman of the Year campaign are still being accepted through Feb. 27th!** If you or someone you know would like to make a difference in the lives of others, please contact the local LLS office at <http://www.lls.org/michigan> or (616) 224-6240. The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is to: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. As Beth can attest, that mission has allowed her to see her daughter grow up. Now she is on her own mission to give back so that other moms, daughters, fathers, sons, brothers, sisters, neighbors and friends – can all live a life free of cancer.

If you would like to know more about LLS, please visit [www.lls.org](http://www.lls.org). Tickets for the May 9 gala are available for purchase at <https://www.lls.org/man-woman-of-the-year/mwoy-western-michigan-1>



**We love to highlight families to provide an opportunity for neighbors to learn more about one another and make connections.** If your family or a family you know would like to be featured, please contact [leigh.hunt@n2pub.com](mailto:leigh.hunt@n2pub.com).

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# MEET C.J. Hier

By Katie McClure

C.J. Hier, an athlete at Forest Hills Central, began his swimming career as a 7-year-old at Watermark Country Club. At a young age, he was not the biggest fan of swimming, but with encouragement from his parents, he continued. Now as a junior at FHC, his love for the sport has grown immensely.

In fall of 2016, C.J. tried out for the Forest Hills boys' swim team. After seeing Hier's potential, Coach Dennis Neat offered him a spot on the team as a freshman. His favorite moment in his swimming career was when the FHC boys' swim team placed 4th at the MHSAA championship last year — this was their highest state finish in seven years. "To bring a trophy home was an awesome way to end the season," C.J. said.

Hier is looking forward to winning the team's third conference championship in a row this upcoming season. He is also excited



C.J.'s academics are another very important component in his life. He is a part of the National Honor Society, and his favorite subject in school is mathematics.



C.J.'s favorite moment in his swimming career was when the FHC boys' swim team placed 4th at the MHSAA championship, their highest state finish in seven years.

to make more memories with his teammates. "I love the team aspect during school season. It makes the season much more fun and exciting!" Hier exclaimed.

Although swimming is a main focus for C.J., his academics are another very important component in his life. C.J. is a part of the National Honor Society, and his favorite subject in school is mathematics. He lives in Cascade with his parents, Chris and Aimee, his sisters, Abby and Maggie, and his dog, Maizey.



*Cascade resident Katie McClure is a senior at FHC. She plays varsity volleyball and is an All-State tennis player. She is also a board member of the Junior Econ Club of Grand Rapids. Other interests include FX, DECA, travel and math.*



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home of the month



# Cascade Transformation

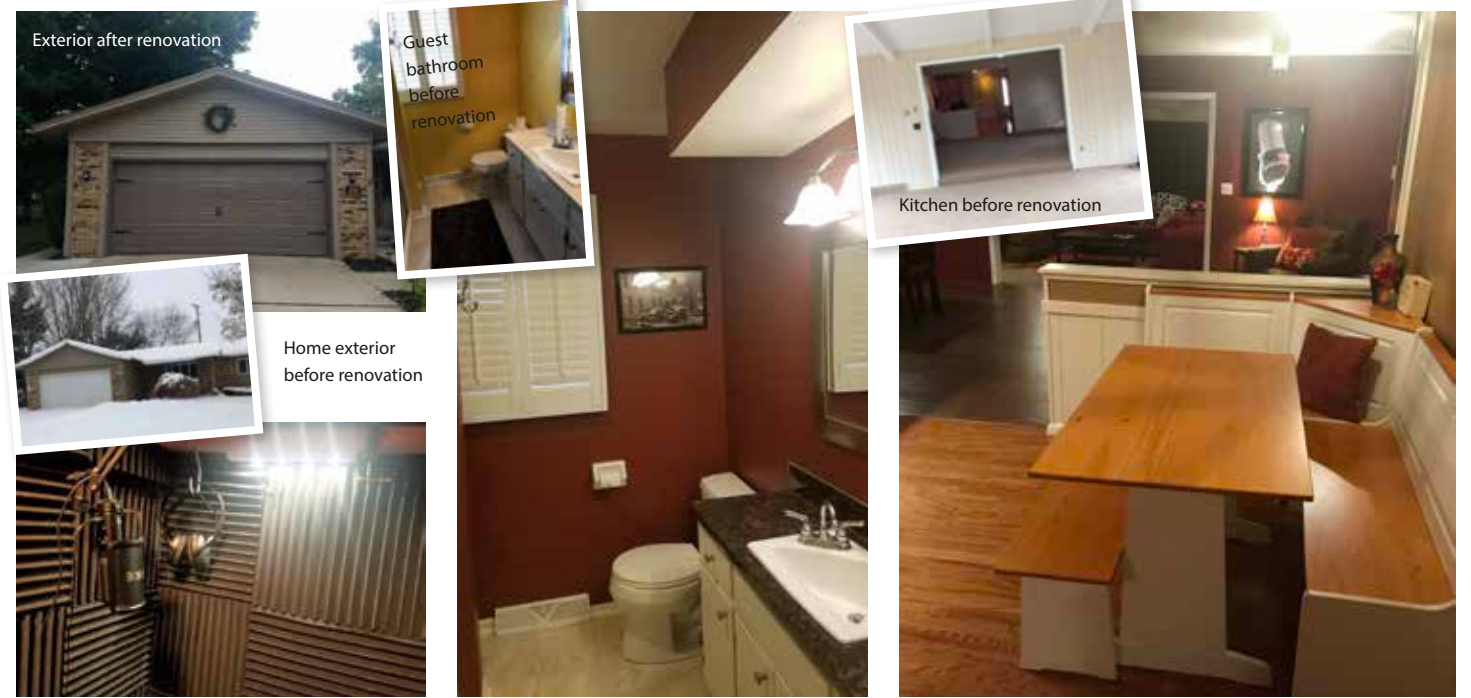
## Cascade Living's February House of the Month

By Cascade resident Michael Kooistra, michaelkooistra.com



Family room before renovation

Family room into kitchen after renovation



Exterior after renovation

Guest bathroom before renovation

Home exterior before renovation

Kitchen before renovation



Closet home recording studio after renovation



Guest bathroom after renovation



Kitchen after renovation

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A home circa 1973 is typically not one we'd think to feature in a House of the Month due to age...but this comfortable home is older only in structure. The entire interior has been dramatically transformed by its current owners over the last several months. The metamorphosis has turned the well-known 70s colors of olive, mustard, brown, and florals to much more current, warm, neutral tones.

It was a labor of love for Matthew and Whitney Swartz, who moved into their Cascade home as relative newlyweds in April of 2018. They had been looking all over Ada, Forest Hills, and Lowell. They'd also considered building but determined that in the current market, they'd be able to get more value and have more potential if they could find the vision in an existing home (I would agree). This four-bedroom, two-bathroom home decidedly had "good bones," and was small enough to manage yet large enough to give them room to grow a family...no kids or pets yet, but that's the plan! They chose a more central Forest Hills location because they already had familiarity with stores, grocery, doctors, dentists, and because Whitney works in the school district as a Spanish teacher.

These self-described music and theatre nerds give lots of credit to their parents for the help making this house a home, beginning with having 100% of the surfaces in the home repainted. Every fixture was replaced, old carpet was replaced with a combination of solid surface flooring and new carpet. They added a few ceiling fans, replaced all the windows with Anderson, swapped out the furnace and AC with new high-efficiency, updated all the electrical outlets and switches, and removed obsolete radiant floor heat.



One of their favorite rooms is what used to be the four season room, which was an addition at some point decades ago. Now it is used as a very comfortable and spacious family room, one of a few mingling areas on the main floor. In addition to this room, there is also an open-concept dining room with an additional sitting area and gas fireplace. This is also open to the kitchen, which itself has another cute built-in eating area. For a 1970's era home, this one feels surprisingly open. And since they don't really need the more formal front living room, it's presently used as an office, which can be cleverly separated with sliding barn doors for privacy. The lower level was also completely redone and now features a family room/movie room, space for another office, and a bedroom. Because the colors of this room are shades of purple-red and light brown, they affectionately refer to the lower family room as the "peanut butter and jelly" room.

One of the more unique features of this home is that they turned a bedroom closet into a fully insulated home studio in which to do voice-overs, advertisements, and other recordings. "The space has a really great sound," says Matthew. I think I'd have a claustrophobic panic attack being in that little space, but they insist it's really outstanding! Both Matthew and Whitney are actors in their free time and have performed in all the local haunts such as Circle Theatre, GR Civic Theatre, Actors Theatre, Jewish Theatre, Wealthy Street,

Cornerstone, and more. In fact, they met while performing the roles of Tom and Myrtle in *Great Gatsby* at Circle Theatre. Ironically...and this is no joke...I had just finished watching this DiCaprio movie just an hour before interviewing them for this article.



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what's up, cascade?

# MEET Mark Scannell

By Cascade resident Allie Hopkins Helm

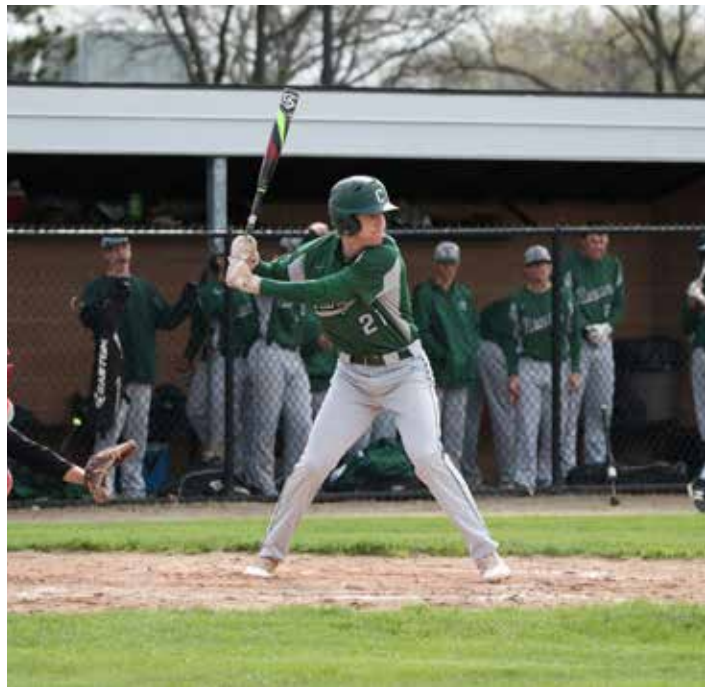
Forest Hills Central 2017 graduate and Cascade resident Mark Scannell attributes learning qualities of mental toughness, perseverance and dedication to his baseball career.

Scannell first fell in love with baseball at the age of 5 and has been playing ever since. Over the years, he has played on both Elite travel baseball teams, traveling as far as Chicago and Indianapolis to play the game and has played on the Forest Hills Central High School Men's Varsity Baseball Team, winning the Jimmy Gerken Tournament with the team his junior year.

His favorite aspect of baseball is that although it's a team sport, pitching is like a game within the game, between the pitcher and the catcher. Scannell's role as pitcher helped lead the FHC Men's Varsity Team to a 29 - 8 - 0 record for the season in spring 2017.



Mark first fell in love with baseball at the age of 5 and has been playing ever since.



Scannell now attends and plays baseball at Kellogg Community College, and knows that perseverance and dedication to the sport and his studies will ultimately lead to his success. One piece of advice he'd give to anyone looking to get into baseball would be to, "work hard, but have fun!" If you are interested in catching any of Scannell's college games, check out: <http://www.kellogg.edu/athletics/baseball/>



Hey, kids! We'd love to get to know the kids on your block. Do you know a family that would enjoy being featured? Contact [leigh.hunt@n2pub.com](mailto:leigh.hunt@n2pub.com), and we will do the rest.



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## precious pets Meet CJ

By Tess Bond

As a child, it seems to be a trend to want a furry friend, like a dog, cat, bunny, or hamster. Cascade's Katie McClure was determined to get a dog and was persistent in asking her parents for one. The constant response of "no" disappointed Katie, but then her life changed when her parents finally said yes to new companion other than a dog... a rabbit!

Meet CJ, the lion-head dwarf rabbit, who is responsible for a lot of joy in the McClure household. Katie was beyond excited about getting her new bunny as he truly made the family complete! The only thing that needed help was his name. As the family brainstormed ideas, the thought of their previous bunny came to mind. Their old bunny's name was Calvin, based off of the designer Calvin Klein, but sadly he passed away. So they thought that calling him Calvin Junior, or CJ for short, would be the perfect way to honor the original Calvin.

The moment they got him, CJ has been treated like a member of the family. He even gets a whole bedroom to himself! Since the rabbit has an entire room designated to him he might be consid-

ered spoiled by some, however, the McClure family loves him so much they believe he deserves to have a ton of space to roam around. Instead of getting plain bunny food the McClures treat CJ like a king and feed him nutritious food like kale, celery, carrots, and berries. The entire family has so much love for him that all they want to do is care for their sweet CJ. Over the years, CJ has brought so much love and happiness into the lives of every family member. His gentle personality and constant want for attention is something the McClures cherish. They are incredibly thankful for their fluffy friend that turned into the main source of bliss throughout the household.



*Tess Bond, a senior at FHC, lives in the Ada/Cascade area with her family, which includes Labrador Retrievers Norman and Ruby. Tess provides Cascade Living readers with informative and fun to read articles about the furry, feathery and finned friends who make our lives complete.*



Cascade Living knows how much you cherish your pets. We welcome the opportunity to introduce them to the neighborhood and would love to feature them. Please contact [leigh.hunt@n2pub.com](mailto:leigh.hunt@n2pub.com), and we will feature them in the next available issue.

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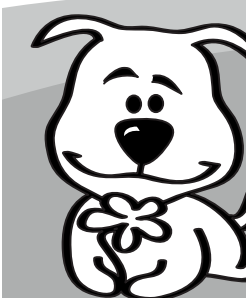
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# meet your NEIGHBORS

## She Shed So!

*Cascade Mom Builds Yard Addition Dubbed a "She-Shed" by Neighbors*

By Cascade resident **Anu Teodorescu**

By day, Marla Bader is a mother of two, works out at Fit Body Boot Camp, manages global programs, and, in the fall of 2016, built her first backyard-shed. Dubbed a She-Shed by her Oliver Woods neighbors, it spans less than 200 square feet and is a testimony to the kind of person Marla is — hardworking, determined, and entirely capable of anything she puts her mind to.

The project started when the Bader's three-car garage didn't leave much space for storing household items and yard equipment. Marla — whose mother was a home economics teacher who consequently exposed her to practical household work — decided that a self-built shed would be the only answer to creating more room for her family's storage needs. "I started it on a whim," she said. "I wasn't even thinking."

When a neighbor walked over to ask her about the plans she had for the three walls she had already put up, Marla began to ques-



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Marla and Dave Bader moved their family from Chicago to Grand Rapids 13 years ago. They, along with their 23-year-old daughter Geordi, and their 19-year-old son Morgan, enjoy the "community engagement" they feel in Oliver Woods and genuinely love their home in Cascade.



While the lumber she used came from Home Depot at 70% off, the majority of the other supplies were also second-hand, recycled, or purchased at a discount.

tion herself. She remembers thinking, "What made me think I could do this?" Sure, she had redone her kitchen cabinets, was an expert at window treatments, and generally did most of the outside work around her house — but this was an entirely different beast altogether. Yet, after spending much of October in Vietnam for work that year, she worked quickly during November and December completing the project before the first snow fell.

The shed, standing at less than 200 square feet, didn't require a Cascade permit. In addition to a metal roof and French doors, she designed the shed in such a way that the siding matched her home. "I knew what I wanted when I started," she said. While the lumber she used came from Home Depot at 70% off, the majority of the other supplies were also second-hand, recycled, or purchased at a discount. "I definitely did this on a budget," she remarks — and she definitely did it alone. Other than a little help from her son and her daughter's boyfriend, Marla built it all with her own two hands, proudly saying, "I don't play well with others."



Marla Bader is a mother of two, manages global programs, and, in the fall of 2016, built her first backyard shed.



The shed, standing at less than 200 square feet, didn't require a Cascade permit. In addition to a metal roof and French doors, she designed the shed in such a way that the siding matched her home.

News of the She-Shed sparked the attention of Cascade Living when Tammarron resident Jane Beckering contacted us about a woman whom she had met at Fit Body Boot Camp, who had decided to take on a massive project by herself. "I think Jane, who was seeing my ridiculous cut up hands every day, was surprised by the result, too," says Marla.

Marla and her husband, Dave, moved their family from Chicago to Grand Rapids 13 years ago, and haven't looked back since. They, along with their 23-year-old daughter Geordi, and their 19-year-old son Morgan, enjoy the "community engagement" they feel in Oliver Woods and genuinely love their home in Cascade.



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# Fighting Inflammation WITH Fatty Acids

By Cascade  
resident **Cathy  
Taig, DC**

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array of possible consequences. If we are truly interested in avoiding disease, we must take into consideration our fatty acid balance.

Something that we can do on a daily basis to improve our fatty acid balance



is to be consistent with having modest amounts of olive oil, butter, and coconut oil in our diet. Replacing margarine and vegetable oils with olive oil, butter (ghee if you are lactose intolerant), and coconut oil may be key to significantly improving your overall health. Olive oil contains lots of antioxidants and

protects against heart disease and stroke. Butter is an excellent source of the fatty acid butyrate, which is anti-inflammatory and has powerful protective effects on the digestive system. Coconut oil is much more durable than corn, safflower, sunflower, canola, or soybean oils and doesn't oxidize as easily when heated. Oxidation is responsible for inflammation and can lead to insulin resistance. Coconut oil is also a medium chain fatty acid which allows your cells to burn energy while storing very little as fat, boosting your metabolism and supporting your immune system. Coconut oil is good for your heart and your hips.



Other fatty acids may also help with balancing and or eliminating certain symptoms. Tuna Omega 3 oil is very beneficial to the mother and baby during pregnancy. Evening primrose oil may help regulate female hormones and manage menopausal challenges. Black currant seed oil has been shown to

alleviate eczema and excessive dry skin. A customized nutritional assessment can reveal many other types of fatty acids that you may not even know about, as well as determine which fatty acid could help take your health to the next level. For more information on this subject visit [www.taigteam.com](http://www.taigteam.com).



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# STICK OF BUTTER RICE

Submitted by Cascade resident **Kari Czarnecki**

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- 1 cup long grain rice (not instant)
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- 1 can Campbell's beef consomme soup
- 2 Tbsp butter

**Directions:**

Put all ingredients in a Pyrex casserole dish and cook covered for 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Stir before serving.

This recipe was submitted by Kari Czarnecki. Kari says it is a quick and easy side dish that the whole family loves!



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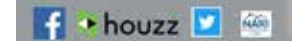


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**pet tips**

# KEEP FIDO WARM THIS WINTER WITH Dr. Laurie Brush



Few topics inspire as much controversy as (faux?) fashion for our furry friends. Do they really need coats and booties, or is this a classic case of anthropomorphism? Inquiring minds want to know!

In actual fact, the suitability of pet outerwear depends on a number of variables, including your dog's breed, coat, age and body condition, plus temperature and duration of exposure. Here are some good guidelines to follow:

**Outerwear:**

- As a general rule, if your dog will only be outside for 10 minutes or less, they typically do not need any clothing.
- Once temperatures drop under 20° F, all owners need to be aware that their dogs could potentially develop cold-associated health problems like hypothermia and frostbite. Watch for signs, including shivering, anxiety, and slowing down. Beware of the wind chill factor.
- Double-coated dogs such as Siberian Huskies and Newfoundlanders are very unlikely to need clothing.
- Shorter-haired breeds, senior dogs, puppies and dogs with medical conditions do benefit from the additional warmth.
- Pets with diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, or hormonal imbalances (such as Cushing's disease) may have a harder time regulating their body temperature, and may be more susceptible to problems from temperature extremes.

**Paw Protection:**

One of the biggest threats to healthy paw pads is the salt used to melt ice on driveways, roads and sidewalks. Prolonged contact with deicers can lead to chemical burns on dog paws. Use pet-friendly salt, and cover your dog's paws when out on walks with paw wax or booties.

- **Booties offer the best protection:** Options include rubber-sole styles with double Velcro straps, waterproof nylon socks, and disposable rubbers.

- **For elderly dogs** who are more prone to slipping and falling on ice, you may wish to try booties with a grip.

**Bed Warmers for Arthritic Pets:**

If your feline friend or canine companion is elderly and/or suffers from arthritis you may wish to offer a heated orthopedic bed.

Styles range from simple heating pads to luxurious heated lounges. Use caution with external heat sources, ensuring your pet is able to get up and move off the heat source if he/she becomes too warm. You may wish to discuss the type of heat source you should use with your veterinarian.



Dr. Laurie Brush with her two rescue dogs, Beezus and Henry

*Dr. Laurie Brush, DVM, is founder of Heaven at Home Pet Hospice, which offers at-home palliative pet care and euthanasia services in West Michigan. For more information, please visit [www.PetHospiceVet.com](http://www.PetHospiceVet.com).*

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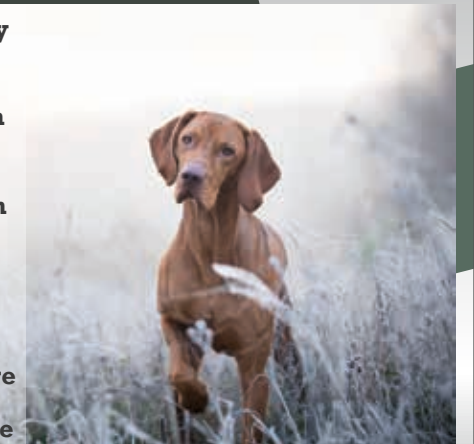
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# Step Up for Down Syndrome

By Maddy Williams

Close to 13,000 people gathered for the largest event in Michigan last fall to support Down syndrome. Step Up for Down syndrome is the annual advocacy and fundraiser event for the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan (DSAWM). Each year, the DSAWM asks families to form walking teams and help raise

funds and awareness for Down syndrome as well all the programs and services that the DSAWM provides to its members.

Many of the walking teams are composed of parents and siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers, and friends who walk in honor of a member with Down syndrome. However, not everyone at the event is connected to a specific member of the DSAWM. The entire community is invited and welcome to attend the event. Participating in the event is an incredible way to show support for the Down syndrome community and the association.

Program Director, Nate Clark, spoke on behalf of the purpose of Step Up. He said, "The purpose of the event is twofold. First, we need to raise funds to make sure the DSAWM can continue to operate and function, provide programming, scholarships, events, medical outreach, and much more to the families of West Michigan. Second, it is a fun time of celebrating those with an extra chromosome. There are so many gifts that the members bring to the world, and the DSAWM aims to celebrate and make known all the amazing ways those with Down syndrome make the world a better place."

The large size of the event requires extensive preparations. The tradition has been going on for over 14 years and takes about an entire year to plan. Step Up alone provides over half of the budget for the DSAWM for a whole year. DSAWM organizes everything from food to t-shirts, to fundraising to activities and so much more. Community and family members volunteered to help ensure that the event ran smoothly. Volunteers from Forest Hills Central High School had the opportunity to provide games and activities for the event. "This event was absolutely amazing. Everyone had so much fun laughing and playing games together," one student said.



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Step Up is a day filled with fun for everyone who has the chance to be part of it. DSAWM's Nate Clark said, "[Step Up] is one of my highlights of each year. I get to see so many people that I love and admire. My friends with and without Down syndrome come together for an amazing event that makes a huge impact in our community. It truly is an honor to work for these families and see how members grow year by year." The celebration brought so many people together and demonstrated to the world and families how amazing their loved ones with Down syndrome really are.



Cascade resident Maddy Williams is a senior at Forest Hills Central. She enjoys being a part of student council, the tennis team and Lifeline.



Do you know of a Cascade resident or group that is going out of their way to make a difference in the community? We would love to feature them. Contact [leigh.hunt@n2pub.com](mailto:leigh.hunt@n2pub.com).

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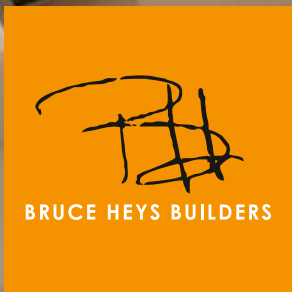
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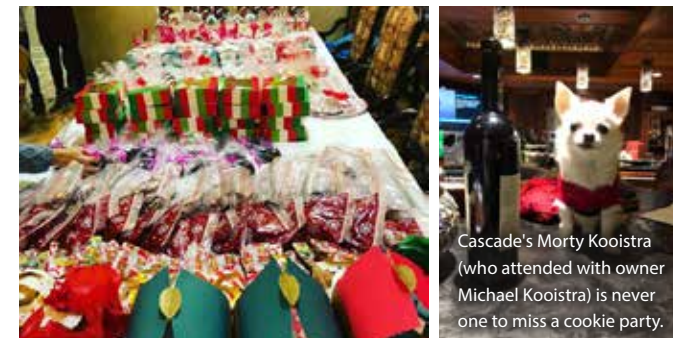
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No cookie exchange is complete without Michelle's Apple Pie Sangria.

Cascade residents Michelle and Mike Gordon opened up their beautiful Winsfield neighborhood home to host an annual holiday cookie exchange for area neighbors and friends.



Cascade's Morty Kooistra (who attended with owner Michael Kooistra) is never one to miss a cookie party.

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### around the town holiday style

# Cascade PETS

## Sidle Up to Santa Paws at Local Howliday Pawty

Santa photos by Mike Banno of Exposure Photography

Cascade pooches patiently waited their turns to tell Santa Paws just what they needed for Christmas late last November as they gathered at Cascade's LOTUS Jo's Yoga studio on 28th Street. Hosted by local businesses Fuzz Buckets GR, FiveW Pets and LOTUS Jo's Yoga, the Howliday Pawty included social time, goody bags and food samples for pets and owners alike. A photo shoot with Santa Paws was provided by Forward Exposure Photography, and photographer Mike Banno flawlessly captured the souls of dozens of Cascade's fur babies and their owners. The Howliday Pawty raised funds, as well as a generous donation of food, treats, and toys, for the Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry.



# EXPLORING AUTHENTIC TRAVEL

Traveling abroad is not just about sightseeing, eating new foods and meeting life-long friends, but stepping out of your comfort zone and discovering the tremendous diversity and beauty that exists in the world.

Over 60% of travelers today value experiences over material possessions, which means 2019 will see travelers favoring many different and authentic experiences. From where one eats and sleeps to how they shop, there will be more of a focus on comfort and happiness this year, than acquiring material goods.

What are some examples of an authentic experience you can have? For some it could mean taking a culinary class in Italy to make pasta from scratch, for others it could be sleeping in a tent in the desert with nomads in Morocco. The key is to motivate yourself to step outside your comfort zone and appreciate the vast world we live in.

Most of these authentic experiences can only be done by mingling with the locals. Those who have traveled enough can all agree that nobody knows a city better than someone who lives there. Locals can show you the most unexpected places, hole-in-the-wall shops and cafes, and tell you the best stories about that place.

It's also important to slow down during travel as well, and authentic experiences can be a great way to do that. Unless your primary reason for traveling is to document what you saw and did for Facebook friends and Instagram followers, there's an argument to be made that if you don't spend a decent amount of time sitting (either by yourself or with others), or walking (not to see sights but to take in the atmosphere), you won't be getting as much out of your trip, or enjoying yourself as much as you could be. This can also give you an opportunity to relax before returning to life back home.

Chasing more authentic and immersive experiences when traveling causes us to appreciate foreign cultures and shows us that humanity worldwide is one and the same. Immersive experiences can subsequently create more compassionate individuals. What's on your travel list for 2019?

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# West Michigan Youth Ballet

What could be better in the world of the arts than experiencing an opulent, full-length ballet that delivers its promise to delight the senses with inspiring music, original choreography, exquisite costuming, and innovative sets? Better is when all the dancers are our children.

For the past 11 years, West Michigan Youth Ballet has produced full-length ballets two times a year: The Nutcracker in December and a different fairy tale in March. The past four seasons have lifted the bar(re) considerably under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephen Sanford, who danced professionally for 17 years. An important reason for the increased excellence of the productions can be traced back to personnel Sanford has brought on board: Associate Artistic Director Samantha Shelton has a storied resume, beginning with the Joffrey Ballet in New York City and including work with ABT for the past 20 years. Like Sanford, she is also a faculty member at Grand Valley State Uni-



versity; and Laura Schwenk-Berman, who danced professionally for 15 years before working as a teacher and choreographer at a number of universities, and now works in both Grand Rapids and Chicago. And since the magic can't happen without the right costumes, Heather Cassady, who spent her professional career working for Disney Studios, creates all those vibrant costumes for the dancers. All of these artists are passionate about working for WMYB. "It's so important for young dancers to have the experience of dancing in a full-length ballet. We feel privileged to be able to provide that opportunity for them," says Sanford.

And just who are these young people? They are the children of West Michigan — from as far north as Traverse City and as far south as Kalamazoo. The dancers come from 11 different studios and GVSU, whose teachers are all willing to help the students learn their pieces. For 17-19 weeks, these 8 to 18-year-olds travel every Sunday to the West Michigan Youth Ballet studios in Ada, Michigan, and more often as a performance nears. And, of course, their dedicated parents make the trip with them. More than 100 volunteers, most of them parents of dancers, help make the ballets run so smoothly. They help with costume construction (The Nutcracker alone used 267 original costumes), performance production, front house management, the gift boutique, which helps audience members to bring memories home, and a delightful high tea before The Nutcracker, which is attended by Characters from the ballet.

The reputation for quality at WMYB continues to grow. The Nutcracker performances at Forest Hills Fine Arts Center were sold out in 2017, so an additional show was added for 2018. Combined with this year's sold-out performance at the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts in Muskegon, more than 4,000 people attended a WMYB performance of The Nutcracker in 2018. That's an impressive audience size at a time in history when so many other distractions are clamoring for our attention.

So what's in store for spring? Cinderella! WMYB produced this ballet four years ago but this year's show will be different. Still based on Prokofiev's timeless music, Laura Berman, who choreographed large sections of Sleeping Beauty 2 years ago, is creating original choreography for the March 23 shows. "The children love this story," says Sanford. "We have 65 dancers performing all the roles and they are so excited to be dancing this well-loved story with all its drama and intrigue. It's a timeless struggle of the journey from feelings of alienation to the joy of finding one's place in life. As our dancers present this work, hopefully, they'll grow in understanding their own place in life. Just imagine: a young sprite from four years ago could find herself cast as a fairy godmother this spring, building her dreams and meeting her goals as a dancer."

Cinderella will be performed twice on Saturday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at DeVos Center For Arts and Worship on the campus of Grand Rapids Christian High School. It's a beauti-

ful venue whose capacity is 1,400 seats and with a stage the same size as the DeVos Performance Hall in downtown Grand Rapids.

As a non-profit, WMYB is dedicated to serving the community. Their already affordable prices are discounted further for schools and seniors, especially those in nursing homes, and they are exploring ways to provide children in hospitals with at least some of the scenes from their ballets. Their major supporters are Michigan Council for the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts, but as a 501c (3), they also accept donations.

To further enhance their student's development as dancers, WMYB additionally provides a Summer Intensive with talent from NYC Ballet, Ballet Chicago, Miami City Ballet, and American Ballet Theater, but also work with as many Michigan artists as possible.

When asked why these highly talented artists spend so much of their time working with these children, Sanford replied: "We live in West Michigan and everyone on our staff is committed to sustaining the arts here. We all know the changes brought about by technology and the battle to pry cell phones from our children's hands. I live the struggle daily with my own five children. Only the arts can provide a meaningful alternative. Only the arts can preserve imagination and creativity, can promote human connections, and can bring about the elevation of our culture. That's what fuels our determination."



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With a passion for estate planning and small business law as proven through his many years' experience, Shawn Eyestone is proud to offer the expertise of a large law firm with a small firm price. "I opened my law office in April of 2010, after practicing in larger firms in Detroit, Kalamazoo and downtown Grand Rapids. While my knowledge base deepened, I saw many areas where clients were not being served as well as they could be. Most of this was the service after the plan was signed," says Shawn. "Everyone was getting great estate plans at the bigger law firms, but they were not given an education on how to make sure that the plan worked and stayed up to date."

"Our goal is to develop a relationship with our clients. We strive to help clients identify and protect what is most valuable to them and their family both at the time they first come to us, but also as the years pass and situations change," says Shawn.



Something that makes Eyestone Law unique is every estate planning and business planning client who works with them is provided with unlimited opportunities to get their questions about their estate plan answered for no additional charge. Eyestone does not believe in charging a client to prepare a plan for them and then charging them again to explain what it says.

"Also, we provide free legal 'gut check' calls for our planning clients who have legal issues in other areas of the law," adds Shawn. "If it is something we can help them work through in about 15 minutes or so, we do not charge for that. If there is legal work that we cannot do, we put them in touch with an attorney we trust to handle the matter for them. If it is a project where we have expertise, we will provide a flat fee to provide the service whenever we can."

Eyestone Law also offers ongoing education for clients to help empower them and their heirs to carry out their plan while preserving the client's values. Instead of cookie-cutter documents, they get to know their clients and make sure those discussions

result in concrete action steps for protecting their client's family and business.

According to Shawn, the three biggest mistakes people make with estate planning are (1) simply not having one written down, (2) not keeping it up to date if they do; and (3) keeping it a secret from the people who are supposed to carry it out or the people who are supposed to hold them accountable. "We provide them with the tools and processes to ensure that they don't make these or other common mistakes," he says.

"Don't put off Estate Planning," adds Shawn. "It may seem that this is something only to be done when you have retired and amassed great quantities of wealth. We suggest that our clients have their children put a plan together as soon as they turn 18. While protecting your financial assets is important, it is even more important to have a plan in place to carry out your wishes while you are still alive."

After graduating from the Lee Honors College at Western University with a dual degree in Public Administration and Criminal Justice, Shawn earned his law degree from Wayne State University. "I thought that I wanted to be a prosecutor until I spent some time working with them during several semesters of clerking with Circuit Court judges. While in school, my grandparents and a couple of unmarried uncles died, and I saw how difficult the legal process was for them. I enjoyed helping them maneuver the process, so I took a job in 2000 working at what was then the big-



gest estate planning firm in Michigan." Shawn describes his path to the Grand Rapids area sort of like Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Detroit was too big, Muskegon was too small, and Grand Rapids was just right.

Shawn grew up in North Muskegon and during college worked as a Park Ranger during the summers at Muskegon State Park. "I've lived in the area most of my life, except for about 10 years during school and my first job out of law school. I have a blended family, my three sons and three step-daughters - six kids total. The oldest is currently studying abroad in Thailand. We have three others in high school, one in middle school, and one in elementary school. We are a busy family with four teenagers!"

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## business beat



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### Meet Tiffany L. Kent, MD, PhD Oculoplastic Associates of West Michigan, PLC

Oculoplastic Associates of West Michigan, PLC specializes in reconstructive and cosmetic surgery of the eyelid and periorbital area. Specifically, this includes drooping/sagging eyelids (both uppers and lowers) and brows, eyelid reconstruction after skin cancer removal and trauma, eyelid and orbital tumors, blocked tear ducts and facial rejuvenation with Botox and dermal fillers.

The practice was established in 2016 by Tiffany Kent, MD, Ph.D. who after returning to Michigan with her family was motivated to start her own business to help ensure flexibility to achieve a work/life balance. According to Dr. Kent, “the office is a small solo-practitioner office with three compassionate employees so you can expect personalized treatment, without feeling rushed. Having friendly, caring and helpful office staff is a priority, and we strive to ensure patients are at ease during their visit.”



Originally from Bay City, Tiffany received a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University, then attended Wayne State University for Medical School and Graduate School. She obtained a Ph.D. in physiology and pharmacology. While in medical school, she explored many fields but felt the most drawn to ophthalmology. After an intern year in Dearborn, MI, and three years of Ophthalmology training at Washington University in St. Louis, she decided to pursue additional training in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery. She stayed in St. Louis for two additional years while completing her fellowship. Following her formal training, she accepted a position in private practice outside of Chicago.

According to Dr. Kent, “It was during that time that my husband and I found ourselves missing being home in Michigan. Our desire to return home prompted me to investigate how to start my own practice, and in fall of 2016, we moved to Grand Rapids. We have enjoyed being back in Michigan, and are thrilled to be putting down roots with our two small children.” She has been married to Heath for 13 years, who is a teacher at Lowell High School and the Girls' Varsity Basketball coach. Their son, Mason, age 6, is a first grader at Thornapple Elementary and loves playing soccer and basketball. Their daughter, Melanie, age 4, is in Preschool at Appletree in Cascade and is very excited to be starting ballet lessons this year.

When not working or driving children to their various activities, Dr. Kent enjoys spending time with family and friends, cooking and taking barre fitness classes. The family resides in Cascade Lakes and when asked what advice she would provide to neighbors and others regarding her areas of expertise she promptly replied, “always wear sunscreen and safety glasses”.

*Tiffany L. Kent, MD, PhD*

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## sponsor spotlight



# Ingrid Anastasiu Keller Williams

*Growing up in Germany allowed Ingrid Anastasiu to experience cultural diversity as many nations and customs are in a relatively small territory. "As a successful sales and marketing executive in high tech, I fell in love with the "American Way of Life" says Ingrid. "I relocated in 1999 as an expat to California. What was meant to be a 3-5 year stay has transformed into me choosing the United States as my primary home."*

"We relocated to Grand Rapids in 2002 and we have raised two children in the vibrant and fast-growing Forest Hills Community: Marc, a junior at University of Michigan, is currently studying abroad in Barcelona. Our beautiful daughter Kim, a sophomore, is in the Spanish Immersion Program at Forest Hills Northern."

"I have been in Real Estate nearly my whole life--selling and buying, remodeling and owning rental properties. Based on my



passion, experience, strong negotiation skills and commitment to superior customer service, I ventured into the path of assisting others to fulfill their dreams of homeownership," says Ingrid. She is proof that if you do what you love, you will excel!

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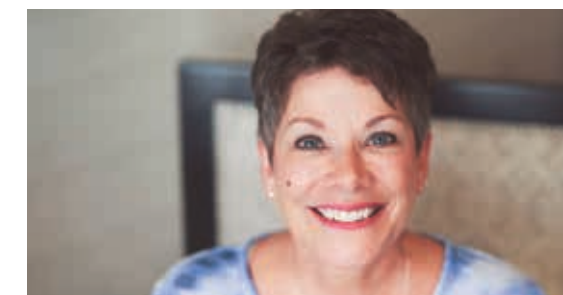
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[midwestairfilter.com](http://midwestairfilter.com)

### ARCHITECTS

**Mathison|Mathison Architects**  
Tom and Evan Mathison  
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[mathisonarchitects.com](http://mathisonarchitects.com)

### ASIAN MARKET

**Asian Delight Marketplace**  
Nancy Tuohy  
(616) 827-1828  
[asiandelightmarket.com](http://asiandelightmarket.com)

### ATTORNEY

**Bettendorf P.C. - Tax and Real Estate Law**  
Robert B. Bettendorf, J.D.,  
Real Estate Broker  
(616) 437-2450  
[rbettendorf@comcast.net](mailto:rbettendorf@comcast.net)

### AUTO

**Harvey Automotive**  
John Leese  
(616) 949-1140  
[harveyautomotive.com](http://harveyautomotive.com)

### AUTOMOTIVE PRE-OWNED SALES & DETAILING

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[grsouthcatering.com](http://grsouthcatering.com)

### CHIROPRACTOR

**Balanced 4 Life Chiropractic Health & Wellness Center**  
Lindsay Rademacher DC  
(616) 666-6092  
[balanced4lifechiropractic.com](http://balanced4lifechiropractic.com)

### Taig Family Chiropractic

Timothy Taig DC and Catherine Taig DC  
(616) 949-9282  
[taigfamilychiro.com](http://taigfamilychiro.com)

### CLEANERS/ALTERATIONS/TUXEDO RENTAL

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(616) 459-9169  
[afendoulistuxedos.com](http://afendoulistuxedos.com)

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[purplepencopy@gmail.com](mailto:purplepencopy@gmail.com)

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Matthew Hudson DDS  
(616) 957-4700  
[beltlinefamilydentistry.com](http://beltlinefamilydentistry.com)

### Stephen Mulder Family and Cosmetic Dental

Stephen Mulder DDS  
(616) 447-1700  
[mulderdental.com](http://mulderdental.com)

### DJ/ENTERTAINMENT

**Ptak Entertainment**  
Scott Ptak  
(616) 485-8588  
[ptakdj.com](http://ptakdj.com)

### EYECARE/OPTOMETRIST

**West Michigan Eyecare**  
Greg Ford, OD  
(616) 949-8500  
[wmeyecare.com](http://wmeyecare.com)

### FINANCIAL ADVISORS

**Discovery Financial**  
Angela and David Muilenberg  
(616) 957-9999  
[discoveryfinancialllc.com](http://discoveryfinancialllc.com)

### FLOORING

**Century Cabinetry Flooring Cleaning**  
Trent Schutte  
(616) 988-4524  
[century-gr.com](http://century-gr.com)

### FROZEN YOGURT

**Spoonlicker's**  
Dianna Darling  
(616) 682-5784  
[spoonlickers.com](http://spoonlickers.com)

### FUNERAL SERVICES

**Metcalfe & Jonkhoff**  
Samuel Metcalf  
(616) 940-7333  
[metcalfandjonkhoff.com](http://metcalfandjonkhoff.com)

### FURNITURE & DESIGN

**Portobello Road**  
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[portobelloroad.us](http://portobelloroad.us)

### HANDBAGS/JEWELRY

**India Hicks**  
Susan Maskell Alexander  
(616) 634-8860  
[indiahicks.com/rep/susana](http://indiahicks.com/rep/susana)

### HEATING & COOLING

**Godwin Heating & Cooling**  
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[godwinplumbing.com](http://godwinplumbing.com)

### HOMEOWNER AND CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

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(616) 240-0680  
jenniferbutlerinteriordesign.com

### LASIK AND COMPLETE EYE CARE

Grand Rapids Ophthalmology  
David Barrett MD  
(616) 949-2600  
seeitclear.com

### Grand Rapids Ophthalmology

Marcus Muallem MD  
(616) 949-2600  
seeitclear.com

### MARKET

#### Kingma's Market

Alan Hartline  
(616) 682-5073  
kingmasmarket.com

### MORTGAGE SERVICES

#### Waterstone Mortgage

David Jackson  
(616) 458-4500  
waterstonemortgage.com

### NUTRITION & WEIGHT LOSS

#### DCMT Solutions

Don Drury  
(616) 682-5120  
ddrury-dcmt@comcast.net

### PHOTOGRAPHY

#### Alyssa Albers Photography

Alyssa Albers  
(773) 391-6634  
alyssaalbersphotography.com

#### Studio 616 Photography

Dave Burgess  
(616) 202-7290  
studio616photo.com

### PIANO LESSONS

#### Eleete Music

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eleetemusic.com

### REALTOR

#### K Cooley Properties

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karolcooley.com

#### Keller Williams Grand Rapids

Michael Kooistra, CRS  
(616) 575-1152  
michaelkooistra.com

### Marie A Hillery - Bettendorf

Assoc Broker, CRS, ABR, GRI, RMM, SFR  
(616) 291-2758  
mariehillery@grar.com

### ROOFING

#### Summit Point Roofing

John Van Wylen  
(616) 622-6343  
summitpointroofing.com

### SKIN CARE CONSULTANT

#### Rodan & Fields

Amber McCarthy  
(269) 720-5774  
ambermccarthy.myrandf.biz

### SPACE TOYS

#### SpaceToys.com

Marcie Down Shoham  
spacetoy.com

### SURGEON/COSMETIC

#### Oculoplastic Associates of West Michigan, PLC

Tiffany L Kent, MD, PhD  
(616) 888-2948  
tiffanylaurenkent@gmail.com

### VETERINARIAN

#### Forest Hills Veterinary Clinic

Michael Knowles DVM  
(616) 949-7420  
foresthillsvet.com

### WATER

### TREATMENT/WATER SOFTENERS

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