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# coulee region women

AREA HOME AND GARDEN MAGAZINE

INSIDE:

**Coulee  
Region Living  
PARADE OF  
HOMES!**

*Animals &  
Agriculture*

BEYOND BUGS  
AND BUTTERFLIES

FARM-TO-TABLE FARE

HOME ON THE RIM

SMALL GARDENS,  
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*Shawna  
Nelson*

Grows with Organic Valley



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Pictured on the cover and above left: Shawna Nelson, CEO, Organic Valley. Photos by Frontier Photography.

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These days, my connections with animals and agriculture are tenuous at best. We have a cat. I have a few plants on the patio, but only one pot contains anything consumable, and those are herbs courtesy of our biweekly community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm box.

But both animals and ag run in my blood. I grew up with parents who worked on western Nebraska cattle ranches—the view from my backyard was thousands of acres of grass and beef cattle, and my childhood chores included cleaning the horse barn, feeding the “milk cow calves” (a half-dozen orphaned calves fed by a couple of Holstein cows kept also for milk for the families on the ranch) and making sure the bevy of barn cats got an extra scoop of cat food to supplement their rodent diet. I picked potato bugs, dropping them into small coffee cans with a bit of gasoline in the bottom, and helped snap beans for canning.

I even married a Minnesota farm boy who has spent his career in agribusiness and goes back a couple weekends a month to help out on the fifth-generation farm where his dad still lives, baling hay, fixing fences and tending to other items on a farm’s endless to-do list.

With my current suburban lifestyle, however, I’ve lost most of my “farm-girl cred.” But that doesn’t keep me from soaking in all the information I can when I have a chance to spend time with those in the trenches, or should I say fields, of agriculture in its many permutations.

Let’s take a tour to learn more about the many ways animals, agriculture and people come together in the Coulee Region.

The Coulee Region features a blend of both the conventional agriculture—corn, soybeans, alfalfa, orchards, dairy, poultry, beef—that is

behind the nation’s ability to feed a growing population, and the organic, locally sourced meat and produce that meets a growing demand from some consumers to know the farmer behind the meal on their table.

It is no secret that our area—Vernon County in particular—is at the center of organic agriculture both small and at-scale, and our cover woman Shawna Nelson has spent a 20-year career with Cashton-headquartered Organic Valley, advancing from an intern to the CEO of the 1,600-farmer-member cooperative that spans 29 states.

Restaurants like The Driftless Café in Viroqua source in-season produce and meat from local farms of all sizes, and farmers’ markets and CSAs mean we can all do the same, whether picking out pumpkins in the fall or subscribing for boxes of dry-aged beef from Creamery Creek Farms.

Of course, not all animals live on farms. Pets are a huge part of many of our lives (including the cat currently snoozing with his head resting on the edge of my laptop). Whether curled up in a lap at home or providing a loving nudge to a patient or student struggling with a stressful situation, dogs like Luna, Cheddar and Hank are a steady presence for the Coulee Region community.

Even those animals we would typically rather not encounter in the wild can teach and entertain—just ask the Coulee Region Humane Society’s educational ambassador Flower.

Goats, bugs, chickens, bees ... you’ll find them all in these pages. And in backyard gardens. And neighboring farms. And the county fair.

Most days, I’m perfectly content with life “in town.” It’s easy to get to the grocery store, our summer CSA box is almost as satisfying as picking a pepper from plants behind the house (and much more varied than any garden I’ve ever grown) and “morning feeding” only involves walking to the kitchen and opening a can of cat food. But every now and then, I miss those days growing up, exploring a 100-year-old barn, feeding a bottle to an orphaned calf, and, yes, sometimes even shoveling out stinky stalls (no thinking needed and great stress-relieving physical motion). But for now, I’m simply grateful for the amazing people in the Coulee Region who put in the long days in the heat and cold, risk the unknowns of weather and market swings, and care for the animals of all kinds—large, small, wild and domestic—that make our area a fantastic place to live.

Thank you.

*Shari*

# coulee region women

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## WOMEN IN THE KNOW



### STEPPIN' OUT IN PINK

The 20th annual Steppin' Out in Pink breast cancer awareness event and fundraiser is set for September 13. The event kicks off with a local vendor market and food trucks at Riverside Park at 7:30 a.m., while the Survivor Social is located at 333 Front St. N until 8:30 a.m. The walk through the downtown La Crosse area begins at 9 a.m. In honor of the 20th anniversary of Steppin' Out in Pink, participants who build a team of 20 walkers will be rewarded with a Steppin' Out in Pink travel mug. Registration is open through September 8 for \$25 and September 8-13 for \$30. The entertainment lineup includes Mollie B and Squeezebox with Ted Lange on the Riverside Park Main Stage, while more will be located at several markers en route.

Find more information and a complete schedule at [www.steppinoutinpink.donordrive.com/events/564](http://www.steppinoutinpink.donordrive.com/events/564).



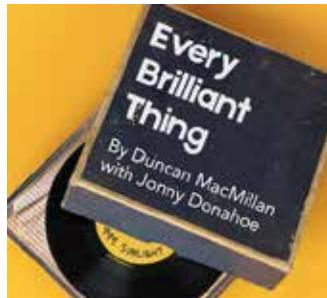
### FIND A FAIR

Those looking for animals, agriculture and much more can find it all at area county fairs. The 2025 Houston County Fair in Caledonia, Minnesota, will be August 13-17. The fair features educational programs and events that focus on several industries, involving agriculture, horticulture and mechanics. The event also promotes rural activities for youth such as 4-H and FFA. Grandstand events include tractor pulling, rodeos, a demo derby and Tuff Trucks presented by the Tri-State Off-Road Association.

Learn more about the Houston County Fair at [www.houstoncountyyfair.com](http://www.houstoncountyyfair.com).

The 2025 Vernon County Fair in Viroqua wraps up area fairs with a run September 10-14. There will be a wide range of activities such as tractor and truck pulling, horse pulling, demolition derby, a horse show and a livestock sale. There will also be several free stage acts roaming around the fairgrounds and multiple events for kids. Delicious food stands and vendors will provide tasty food during the fair, while there will also be a pie auction and rocket launch.

Discover more about the Vernon County Fair at [www.vernoncountyyfair.com](http://www.vernoncountyyfair.com).



### EVERY BRILLIANT THING

The Pump House Regional Arts Center and Grey Area Productions are bringing a performance to the stage in September in support of Suicide Awareness Month.

*Every Brilliant Thing* is an immersive storytelling experience that blends comedy, improv and audience interaction to tell the story of a boy growing up in the shadow of mental illness and learning to grapple with his own adult experiences with love, loss and depression. *Every Brilliant Thing*, written by Duncan MacMillan with Jonny Donahoe and directed by Pete Rydberg, provides a life-affirming jolt of humanism, reminding us that hope comes from the miracles of life's minutiae.

Performances will be held 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, September 11-13 and 18-20 and 2 p.m. Sundays September 14 and 21. Tickets are \$30 general admission, \$25 for Pump House members and \$15 for students and military. They can be purchased online at [www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026](http://www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026).



### HMONG NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The 2025 Hmong New Year Celebration, hosted September 20-21 at Veterans Park in West Salem

by the Hmong Cultural and Community Center in La Crosse, will focus on culture and history as the community recognizes the 50th anniversary of the first Hmong immigrants arriving in the United States in 1975.

The La Crosse event is one of the largest such events in the Midwest—and one of the few celebrated outdoors—and is expected to have attendance of nearly 15,000 people each day. Activities begin at 8 a.m. Saturday with a traditional New Year ceremony and ribbon cutting. Events in the park center around a dance competition, which will host 20 groups of traditional dancers from throughout the Midwest, along with soccer and volleyball tournaments and a wide selection of food vendors. Guest speakers for the event will be Tony Yang, cultural liaison with the School District of La Crosse, and Pakeng Vang, president of 18 Council of Wisconsin. Activities in the park run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

Saturday night also includes traditional music, art and dancing 6 p.m. to midnight at the Omnicenter in Onalaska.

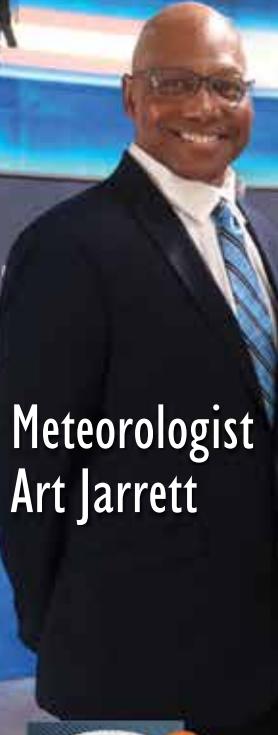
Admission to Veterans Park is \$25 per vehicle at the park gates; overflow parking at La Crosse Speedway is \$20 per vehicle. Shuttles are offered between the Speedway and the park. A limited number of prepaid tickets are available from the Hmong Cultural Center at \$40 for a weekend pass covering both days.



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# *Growing into Her Role*

**Organic Valley CEO Shawna Nelson puts the focus on farmers, opportunities and connection.**

BY HEIDI OVERTON | PHOTO BY FRONTIER PHOTOGRAPHY

**W**hat is success? More importantly, what is success with meaning and purpose? One very special woman in the Coulee Region has achieved this kind of success, and she's modestly and confidently leading Organic Valley as the cooperative's first female CEO.

Organic Valley has experienced amazing growth since its humble beginnings in 1988, and this leading food cooperative keeps making headlines. In March of this year, 41-year-old Shawna Nelson was chosen to lead the team of over 800 employees and 1,600 family farms.

"It's an incredible honor and a deeply humbling experience to step into this role, not only as the fourth CEO, but also as the first woman to hold this position in the cooperative's history," says Nelson. "It's also meaningful. Throughout my upbringing, my parents always told me I could accomplish anything I put my mind to. With hard work and effort, anything is possible."

## **EXPERIENCE FROM ALL ANGLES**

When former CEO Jeff Frank stepped down to lead another company, Organic Valley didn't have to look far to find his replacement. Nelson was already working for the cooperative as the executive vice president of membership. Prior to that, she had roles in recruitment, sales analysis, marketing, dairy pool management, employee relations and field operations. Thanks to the hard work and expertise she displayed over the years, she was the perfect choice.

Her journey with Organic Valley started when she applied to be a human resources intern in 2005. The initial summer internship turned into a semester-long experience and then a full-time position. It's safe to say that Nelson knows the cooperative inside and out. Given all of her experience and zeal, the board knew without a doubt that they had found their next CEO.

"I grew up in Viola, and after graduating from Kickapoo High School in 2002, I pursued a business degree with a minor in accounting from UW-Stevens Point," explains Nelson. "I was eager to apply my skills in a meaningful way, and Organic Valley provided the perfect opportunity. During my interview, I was told it was the busy season, and it would slow down. Here we are 20 years later, and



Organic Valley CEO Shawna Nelson treasures connections, both with the 1,600 farmer-members who make up the cooperative and with her supportive family—husband, Reggie, and son, Bentley.



I'm thankful it never did. I am grateful for the chance to grow with such a values-driven cooperative. With energy and heart, I am ready for the important work ahead."

### PASSION AND PRIORITIES YIELD OPPORTUNITIES

What makes Nelson stand out in her role is her passionate commitment to the men and women who built and run this cooperative—the farmers, other leaders and support staff who are all dedicated to the very important mission of providing a healthier future. She believes Organic Valley's greatest strength is its collective voice. Everyone shares the same vision and forms a fantastic team. People, animals and the planet come first.

"It's a tremendous honor to serve our team and fight for the organic family farms," says Nelson. "My role allows me to work on meaningful projects that support our farmers while delivering high-quality organic food to our consumers. Every day brings new opportunities to grow and lead with purpose, and I'm committed to making a difference in the lives of our farmers and their families. Although I work hard, working for the farmers is incredibly humbling because they are working as hard if not harder than me every day."

### FACE-TO-FACE WITH FARMER-OWNERS

Nelson strives to foster authentic relationships with the Organic Valley farmers—the true reason the cooperative exists. Organic Valley is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative, and there

are more than 1,600 family farms in 29 states across the nation, with more farmers joining each year. She travels to visit these farms, host town hall meetings with farmer-owners, collaborate with processing partners, attend industry events or meet with policymakers, consumers and customers. Connecting with the farmers is the privilege she loves the most.

"I have celebrated with farmers on significant occasions such as the first day their milk is picked up by the organic truck. I help them navigate through challenging situations, and I show them I care by advocating for the interest of organic farms," says Nelson. "Although technology facilitates communication, nothing can replace a handshake, sharing experiences or having a conversation over a nutritious organic meal."

### FAMILY TIES

Outside of her CEO duties, Nelson focuses on her roles as wife and mother. Her parents and in-laws are also very dear to her. They were all instrumental in helping her achieve her vocational milestone, and they keep her grounded and well supported. She also attributes her commitment to family farms to her grandparents. While Nelson was growing up, her grandparents were farmers, and she witnessed the challenges they faced. This instilled in her a commitment to provide better opportunities for farmers.

"Balancing work and family is challenging, but I manage with the amazing support I have," says Nelson. "At work, my

colleagues and the farmers I serve are part of my community, and we rely on each other. Their encouragement and dedication to our mission inspire me to achieve balance and stay focused on what truly matters."

### GROWING TOGETHER

As she looks into the future and how she can move Organic Valley forward, she knows that working with and listening to the community—our community—are key. Without the community's input and support, Organic Valley wouldn't be thriving the way it is today.

"The community shows up and cheers for us and offers help when needed. There is truly nothing out of reach when you have a community like ours," Nelson says. "I am incredibly grateful to be born and raised here, and each day I am inspired by the support and opportunities we have. This region has made me who I am today, ready to lead with passion and commitment." CRW

*Heidi Overton is one of Organic Valley's biggest fans, and writing about Nelson was a privilege. Heidi lives and writes in Vernon County, just down the highway from Organic Valley's Cashton location.*

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*Monitoring insect populations to inform agriculture is a key part of Krista Hamilton's job with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Bureau of Plant Industry.*

## BITTEN BY THE BUG

**Entomologist Krista Hamilton is among insects' biggest cheerleaders.**

BY LISSA CARLSON | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

There it is, that creepy crawler that's somehow wound its wayward way into your home. Maybe you catch and release, or perhaps you run for the vacuum and whisper a disheartened apology while justifying its crushing conclusion. Most of us have little tolerance when insects invade our homes.

Krista Hamilton aspires to improve insect tolerance. An entomologist with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Bureau of Plant Industry since 1998, Hamilton urges consideration of the many ecological roles insects play.

"They're all important for the ecological services they provide, not just bees and butterflies," the La Crosse woman says. Consider, for example, that in the past 20 years, Gila monster venom has transformed how we regulate blood glucose levels in diabetics. Might science make similar discoveries among the thousands of species of insects?

### MINDFUL OF MITES

Hamilton was originally a biology major at University of Wisconsin-Madison when an entomology course impacted her. The class required creating an insect collection, which meant field trips to the UW Arboretum and other natural areas around Madison.

"When you're looking at insects and observing them, you have to be present," Hamilton says. "I'm not thinking about all the other pressures in life or my anxieties. It demands that kind of focus. I think that's what resonated with me."

### A BUG'S LIFE

Wisconsin ranks well in agriculture production, first in the nation for cranberries, ginseng and snap beans, according to Hamilton. We also rank in the top five for potatoes, tart cherries, carrots, green peas, sweet corn and Christmas trees.

Day to day, Hamilton's work focuses on

helping the agriculture industry maximize its crops while minimizing pests. Throughout the growing season, Hamilton and interns conduct field sampling at farms, where they set traps to collect and count visitors caught by their nets. Using knowledge of life cycles, egg laying and arrival times, Hamilton is a sort of pest meteorologist, informing farmers when a pest may peak.

This work is particularly crucial for exports that demand pest-free product. Top destinations for Wisconsin produce include China, Southeast Asia and Vietnam, as well as Japan, Canada, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico and the UK.

Threats to agriculture exist, of course. Hamilton's team watches for destructive exotic pests to eradicate them before they spread. Genetically engineered corn, intended for use when high-population outbreaks occur, has become routinely used as "insurance," allowing insects to develop resistance.

"The tools that farmers have relied on for 25 years to eliminate corn pests may become ineffective," Hamilton says, "and we could see a resurgence in these historical pest problems."

### FUTURE FATE

In spite of threats, Hamilton has hope. "There's reason for optimism," she says. "There's growing awareness of regenerative agriculture and the concept that it all starts with the soil."

Key principles of regenerative agriculture include no-till or reduced-till agriculture, minimized soil disturbance and hearty crop rotation (Hamilton says it's like a balanced diet for soil). Growing the right plants in succession can capture carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Essentially, it considers the whole system and how it works together, encouraging great plant and—yes—insect diversity. **CRW**

*Lissa Carlson is a local writer and high school English teacher who admits to apologizing while taking out the wayward living room spider or two.*

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Louisa and Justin Peterson and their family have turned Creamery Creek Farms near Bangor into a diversified operation including dairy, pork and beef, selling dry-aged beef directly to consumers.

## DIVERSIFIED AND DYNAMIC

**Louisa Peterson and Creamery Creek Farms take a multifaceted approach to farming and family.**

BY TALLITHA REESE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Louisa Peterson is a wife, mom, farm partner and wearer of many hats at Creamery Creek Farms near Bangor, a family farm that offers dry-aged beef, Duroc pork and dairy products for customers interested in transparency, quality and connection from the farmers who raise their food.

Though Peterson has held different roles through the years, when her family launched the meat business, she stepped fully into that arena, taking on marketing, customer service, website management and shipping, in addition to regular farm chores, all while raising four children and staying active in the community.

### THE ROAD TO NOW

Peterson grew up in Michigan and met her husband, Justin, at Michigan State University in the early 2000s. After college they came to Wisconsin, moving around with cows and kids, before settling in Bangor in 2010.

When they placed a classified ad looking for a dairy farm to rent, the Hansen family answered. Soon after, the two families combined herds and created a partnership that would lead to Creamery Creek Farms.

“Today the farm is diversified, dynamic and very much a reflection of both our traditions and our values,” explains Peterson. “What started as a conventional dairy has grown and added a direct-to-consumer beef business and a place that’s deeply committed to family, conservation and community.”

Creamery Creek Farms sells mostly online, shipping products across the country, though they also attend local

farmers markets and offer subscription boxes, called CreekClub, for customers who want high-quality meat regularly without having to think about it.

### A TRUE FAMILY FARM

Creamery Creek Farms is as much about family as it is business. It’s the home where the Petersons are raising four children: Joe, 19; Jake, 16; Josh, 14; and Johanna, 11, all of whom are very involved in the farm.

“Our kids are growing up in the barns and pastures and learning what it means to work hard, be flexible and love something bigger than yourself,” says Peterson.

Though she admits it’s not always easy to balance farming and family life—lines often blur between the two—the family is spending their days together, doing meaningful work.

“It’s messy and beautiful all at once,” says Peterson. “That said, I do have to be

intentional about carving out time that’s not ‘farm time,’ whether that’s a family fishing trip or just sitting down to a real dinner at the table.”

### COMMUNITY TIES

Beyond the farm, Peterson enjoys writing, cooking and gardening and is also active in church, volunteers at her kids’ school and serves as the township clerk. Additionally, she organizes a local Thanksgiving community meal—one of her favorite ways to connect and give back to the community.

Similar community support is evident from the farm as well, which supports local FFA and 4-H groups, donates to WAFER Food Pantry and sponsors area events.

Future Creamery Creek Farms plans include adding more ready-to-eat products, expanding their corporate Christmas gift box program and developing online educational content for customers learning to cook with dry-aged meat. The dairy farm is also incorporating more robotic technology and considering a renewable energy project. **CRW**

Tallitha Reese is a freelance writer and content manager based in Cashton. She owns Words By Reese, and you can find out more about her and her work at [www.wordsbyreese.com](http://www.wordsbyreese.com).



Veterinarian Dr. Sarah Slaby offers a wide range of products for livestock, pets and people through Dr. Sarah's Essentials, providing alternatives to synthetic hormones and medication.

## FROM FARM GIRL TO VETERINARIAN

**Dr. Sarah Slaby's holistic wellness journey—for people and animals alike—is rooted in grit and compassion.**

BY NICOLE CZARNOMSKI | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**D**r. Sarah Slaby's upbringing on a small farm with nine siblings shaped the foundation of her work ethic and passion for veterinary medicine. "Life was demanding, with two farms to manage and daily chores from sunrise to sunset," Dr. Slaby says. Between homeschooling and hands-on farming, she developed resilience, resourcefulness and practical skills early in life. She quickly took on responsibilities like driving tractors and raising calves, even launching her own business, Sarah's Quality Calves, before she was a teenager.

### TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Her deep concern for animals emerged when veterinary care was out of monetary reach for her family. This sense of helplessness when animals were sick drove her to pursue a veterinary career. "It wasn't until college that I was diagnosed with dyslexia. I always knew my brain worked differently," says Dr. Slaby, whose practice is based near Arcadia. "But that creative difference became my strength—hands-on work came naturally to me, and all the time I spent on the farm gave me an edge in vet school."

As she entered the veterinary field, Dr. Slaby began to question the widespread use of

pesticides, hormones and other chemicals in agriculture, especially as she became a mother and grew more aware of environmental and health impacts. She was particularly concerned about how these substances could affect the human body. This awareness motivated her to combine natural alternatives with conventional practices in livestock care.

### ROOTED IN WELLNESS AND PURPOSE

Combining her clinical background with her values, Dr. Slaby developed an organic, chemical-free product line for both animals and humans. She has been creating sustainable products for people, pets and livestock for the last 18 years. Today, as the owner of Dr. Sarah's Essentials, she continues to advocate for safe, biological and sustainable food systems.

"I focus on prevention by using food as medicine," she says. "A proper balance of vitamins and nutrients through diet strengthens our immune system and reduces disease." When deficiencies arise, supplements can help fill the gaps, but whole foods remain the most effective and natural source of nourishment.

A strong immune system, supported by a healthy lifestyle, allows the body to handle bacterial infections more efficiently, which

helps the body heal faster, often without the need for prescription medication. "This approach also reduces the risk of antibiotic resistance, as medications are used more sparingly and only when truly necessary," she explains.

Natural products offer another layer of protection because they vary from batch to batch, making it harder for bacteria to build resistance. Unlike synthetic drugs, their complexity and variability make them more challenging for pathogens to adapt to. This makes natural remedies a valuable tool in long-term health and infection management.

### HOLISTIC HEALING FOR ALL

The Dr. Sarah's Essentials product line uses human-grade, natural ingredients, offering the same level of care for animals as for people. As more farmers began embracing holistic practices in their homes, it made sense to extend that care to their animals. This demand, along with her personal experience using natural remedies during pregnancy, inspired Dr. Slaby to start creating products like pain-relief and eczema lotions, aromatherapy blends and calming salves. "I have been so fortunate to



Dr. Sarah Slaby combines conventional and holistic practices in working with both large and small animal patients.



have my business grow by word of mouth. I have done little advertising due to the strong interest from clients, friends and family," she says. A range of regional retailers also carry her products in their stores.

Her approach to holistic animal care often prompts questions from livestock owners and pet parents, especially around effectiveness

and misconceptions. Although natural solutions can be effective, more research and funding are needed to understand their healing properties fully. Dr. Slaby acknowledges that skepticism still exists, often due to misinformation or lack of firsthand experience, and emphasizes the importance of education and open-mindedness.

## EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

Educating clients is a top priority for Dr. Slaby. She believes that knowledge empowers people to make informed decisions, especially as more consumers grow concerned about the side effects of synthetic medications. Her clients are often those who care deeply about sustainable, holistic farming practices—not just for animal health, but for the environment and future generations. She challenges the conventional mindset of "just using antibiotics" and instead asks how we can live more sustainably and give back to the land.

Sustainability is a guiding value in her business and lifestyle. Dr. Slaby is committed to leaving the earth better than she found it. She attracts like-minded clients who share her values and commitment to long-term well-being for animals, people and the planet. CRW

Nicole L. Czarnomski is a freelance writer in southeastern Minnesota.



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(Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Area)

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Past President: Alex Goodman (Wisconsin Building Supply)

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Tom Thompson (life) (T.N. Thompson Enterprises)

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Jon Olson (life) (Jon Olson Construction)

Kraig Lassig (Lautz Lassig Custom Builders)

Mark Etrheim (life) (MasterCraft Homes)

Tom Thompson (life) (T.N. Thompson Enterprises)

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Executive Assistant: Christina Mehrkens

Administrative Assistant: Kaylee Sweisford

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## **Parade of Homes Committee Members**

Chair: Rachel Persson (Coulee Region Communications)

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David Coleman (Coleman Custom Homes)

Dawn Mazzola (Mazzola Construction & Consulting)

Duane Schulze (Marlin Homes)

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Tara Mayberry (Altra Federal Credit Union)

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**It is with pleasure** that we welcome all to the 2025 Parade of Homes hosted by the La Crosse Area Builders Association.

You are invited to walk through and tour some of the greater La Crosse area's most beautiful homes; speak with our talented builders, associates and trade professionals; and make note of your favorite features for your own future home. Our teams of

construction professionals have worked tirelessly to make these homes with the utmost care and quality. Please join us as we tour eight of the area's newest builds and see what our La Crosse Area Builders Association members have to offer homeowners of our area.

We are continuing with digital ticketing for added convenience this year. Guests are still able to purchase tickets with cash at Altra Federal Credit Union locations. Everyone will be presented with a unique code that grants access to the homes, so please make sure you have that with you when you come for the Parade. Thank you in advance for your patience with us and our volunteers as we learn to use these digital tickets as well.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all our volunteers, the Parade of Homes planning committee, LABA's rockstar staff, all participating builders and professionals for making the Parade possible year after year. Countless hours of work go into planning this weekend so that we can showcase the best that the Coulee Region has to offer.

We would like to especially thank you, our guests, who attend this event. Thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to tour these wonderful homes, and please remember to vote for our "People's Choice" award for your favorite home!

With gratitude,

**Rachel M. Persson, Coulee Region Women**

2025 Parade of Homes Committee Chair

## **Parade of Homes® August 2025**

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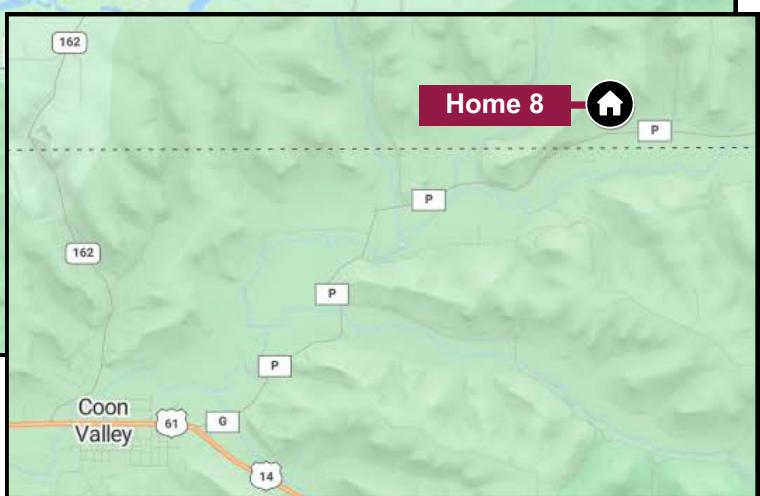


# PARADE OF HOMES

## 2025 MAP



Map is not to scale and is only for reference. Scan QR code for exact map.



# PARADE HOME LISTINGS 2025

#	Builder	Phone	Address	Subdivision	Beds	Baths	Sq. Ft.	Pg.	Viewed
1	JD Powell Construction LLC	608-769-7604	1816 Golden Gate Way, Holmen	Seven Bridges	2	2	2,263	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Elsen Construction	608-386-0333	280 Weston Rd., Holmen	West Ridge	5	3.5	3,440	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Bratager Builders LLC	608-386-5254	251 Weston Rd., Holmen	West Ridge	5	3.5	3,300	14	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Lautz Lassig Custom Builders	608-792-0656	W6311 Valley Pl., Holmen	Westwood Hills	5	3.5	5,682	17	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Coleman Custom Homes LLC	507-259-4931	3381 Emerald Valley Dr., Onalaska	Emerald Valley	5	4.5	8,114	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Mazzola Construction & Consulting LLC	608-780-8537	711 Grand Glen Ct., Onalaska	Grandview Estates	6	4.5	4,948	21	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Mazzola Construction & Consulting LLC	608-780-8537	825 Crestwood Ln., Onalaska	Crestwood Estates	4	2.5	3,716	24	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Coleman Custom Homes LLC	507-259-4931	W1050 County Rd. P, Coon Valley	N/A		5	3.5	5,368	27 <input type="checkbox"/>

*As you tour, please remember that families live in these Parade Homes.*

## VOTE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD



Vote before Sept. 1st, 2025

### HOW TO CAST YOUR VOTE:

1. Purchase your \$10 Parade ticket online, at participating Altra Federal Credit Unions or at any Parade home.
2. Visit as many Parade homes as you'd like.
3. Once you visit your last Parade home of the tour, fill out the People's Choice Award survey online or on paper. To access the survey online, scan this QR code. Paper surveys can be requested from volunteers at any Parade home.
4. The survey will ask for your unique Ticket Code, which can be found near the QR code of your ticket.

## TOUR ETIQUETTE

In order to make our Parade of Homes tour an enjoyable experience for everyone, we ask that you adhere to these guidelines:

### DO...

- ✓ Bring your phone.
- ✓ Be courteous at all times.
- ✓ Use the portable restrooms outside.
- ✓ Respect all furnishings, appliances, etc.
- ✓ Wear shoe covers or socks **inside** the homes.
- ✓ Follow parking signage.
- ✓ Enjoy the experience!

### DON'T...

- 🚫 Walk on landscaping.
- 🚫 Bring young kids (<13) or pets.
- 🚫 Use bathrooms inside the homes.
- 🚫 Eat, drink or smoke inside the homes.
- 🚫 Wear your shoe covers **outside** of the homes.
- 🚫 Block driveways or park on seeded lawns.
- 🚫 Take photos inside the home.



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HOME 1

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LABA MEMBER SINCE 2024

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**LABA members used:** Altra Federal Credit Union; Arcade Portables LLC; Balduzzi's; Builders Flooring, Inc.; Garage Force of La Crosse; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Hallman Lindsay Quality Paints; Hidden Valley Designs, Inc.; Karl's TV & Appliance, Inc.; La Crosse Fireplace Company; Marble Shop, Inc.; Marvin Windows & Doors; Stetter Electric; Wisconsin Building Supply, Inc.



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## HOME 2

280 WESTON RD., HOLMEN - WEST RIDGE  
5 BEDROOMS | 3.5 BATHS | 3,440 SQ FT

## ELSEN CONSTRUCTION

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2025

Elsen Construction has unveiled a custom-built home that blends design and everyday functionality. This stunning residence boasts 3,440 square feet with five bedrooms and three-and-a-half bathrooms of carefully planned living space. More than just a home, this project reflects Elsen Construction's dedication to detail, material quality and expert craftsmanship.

Two covered porches with stained wood ceilings and an elegant front door invite you into the home. Alliance double-hung windows and wood-grain overhead doors complete the exterior aesthetic. On the back deck, Trex decking and a Westbury aluminum railing system with integrated LED lighted post blend durability and elegance.

Inside, Elsen Construction embraces timeless materials, centering the design around white oak finishes, including doors, trim, cabinetry and the open stairwell railing. Wood-grain luxury vinyl plank runs throughout the space. The kitchen is a show-stopper, with custom white oak cabinets, a hidden pantry and quartz countertops.

A four-car garage provides ample storage, while a storm shelter adds peace of mind. The lower level features lookout windows, a wet bar and a large living area. Limestone retaining walls complement the natural surroundings, and the LED-accented gable lighting adds a subtle architectural flair.

**LABA members used:** Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Coulee Floors & Design; E & B Insulation; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; JBrooke Garage Door LLC; New Castle Title of La Crosse; Schneider Heating & Air Conditioning; Sherwin-Williams; Stetter Electric; Waldenberger Inc.; Wisconsin Building Supply, Inc.



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## HOME 3

251 WESTON RD., HOLMEN - WEST RIDGE  
5 BEDROOMS | 3.5 BATHS | 3,300 SQ FT

## BRATAGER BUILDERS LLC

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2023



BRATAGER BUILDERS LLC  
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CHRIS BRATAGER

608-386-5254

bratagerbuilders@gmail.com



This striking contemporary five-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom home offers 3,300 square feet of thoughtfully designed, family focused living space, perfect for entertaining. The exterior features a 50-year steel roof, Marvin casement windows, Smart siding and a warm cedar-and-stone-clad front entry. A covered outdoor patio is prepped for a future TV, fireplace and outdoor kitchen, along with an irrigation system, Aquor water faucets and Kula Modern electrical outlets for a clean, modern finish.

Inside, you'll find custom cabinetry throughout, quartz countertops, wide-plank white oak flooring and a chef's kitchen with Thermador appliances. Layered lighting includes recessed LEDs, above/under cabinet lighting and toe-kick accents. Smart-home features like Lutron lighting control, invisible speakers, in-wall iPad control system and a linear electric fireplace with a 75-inch FrameTV and tray ceiling elevate the space. The spa-like master bath features Kohler fixtures.

The garage includes a floor drain and Quantum concrete coating, is heater-ready and has a dedicated 50-amp EV charging outlet. The lower level offers two bedrooms, a full bath, a family room, a second laundry and home theater prewire.

**LABA members used:** ACT Concrete, Inc.; Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Arcade Portables LLC; Badger; Balduzzi's; Brothers Lawn Care; Contractor Supply of West Salem; E & B Insulation; Eide Electric LLC; Floorcrafters, Inc.; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Gerrard-Hoeschler, Realtors; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; HABiTECH; Heartwood Custom Cabinets LLC; La Crosse Fireplace Company; Pons Countertops LLC

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# HOME 4

W6311 VALLEY PL., HOLMEN - WESTWOOD HILLS  
5 BEDROOMS | 3.5 BATHS | 5,682 SQ FT

## LAUTZ LASSIG CUSTOM BUILDERS

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2011

Lautz Lassig Custom Builders is thrilled to invite you into this spacious ranch home designed for busy families. The great room with tray ceiling nestles custom cabinetry around a wood and marble fireplace. The kitchen is a chef's dream, boasting flowing granite and luxury appliances. Multiple barreled hallways and solid oak floors tie in the main floor. The master getaway suite with tray ceiling connects to a walk-in closet and master bath with a tiled double shower and soaker tub. Two oversized bedrooms, one-and-a-half baths, a built-in six-locker mudroom and a laundry room complete the upper floor; while one bedroom, a craft room and a massive family room with a stylish wet bar offer a recreational winter retreat in the lower level. The heated three-car garage allows plenty of space for vehicles, outdoor gear and a lawnmower for the acreage. Sip a lemonade on the covered back porch or brick patio as you savor wide-open coulee views and burgeoning landscaping with over 20 freshly planted trees. Thanks to the Pate family for letting us show off their lovely home.

**LABA members used:** ACT Concrete, Inc.; Altra Federal Credit Union; Arcade Portables LLC; Bagniefski Heating & Air Conditioning; Beyer Custom Cabinets, LTD; Contractor Supply of West Salem; Coulee Floors & Design; Coulee Region Roofing & Exteriors LLC; Elite Electrical Solutions LLC; Every Plumbing & Heating, Inc.; Focus on Energy; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; Impact Drywall; Jon Olson Construction, Inc.; Knight Barry Title United LLC; La Crosse Fireplace Company; Marvin Windows & Doors; Midwest TV & Appliance; Overhead Door Company of the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.; Pons Countertops LLC; Premier Seamless; Prime 1 Painting and More; Quality Foam Insulation; River City Landscape, Inc.; Rybold Excavating & Plumbing Inc.; Sherwin-Williams; Wisconsin Building Supply, Inc.; Xcel Energy, Inc.



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## HOME 5 3381 EMERALD VALLEY DR., ONALASKA - EMERALD VALLEY

5 BEDROOMS | 4.5 BATHS | 8,114 SQ FT

### COLEMAN CUSTOM HOMES LLC

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2019

Discover this exquisite new five-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bathroom home designed for luxury and comfort. The living room features vaulted ceilings and a stunning 19-foot quartz fireplace. The spacious kitchen boasts custom cabinets with lighting, quartz countertops and an attached butler's pantry that's a must-see! A grand tower room with custom stairs and a giant chandelier add unique character.

Main-level amenities include a large mudroom with floor-to-ceiling lockers and benches, an office and a laundry room. The elegant wine room showcases custom cabinets and a stone wall with illuminated wine racks.

The master suite offers private deck access, a beautiful bathroom with his-and-hers vanities, a makeup counter and a walk-in tile shower with multiple shower heads. The walk-in closet features custom illuminated cabinetry, while a private master laundry room adds convenience.

Custom quartz countertops, white oak flooring and 8-foot doors complement soaring 10- to 12-foot ceilings throughout. The basement includes three bedrooms, workout and play areas, a game room, a golf simulator/movie theater and patios perfect for entertaining and family living.

**LABA members used:** Balduzzi's; Berger Plumbing LLC; Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.; Builders Flooring, Inc.; Coulee Bank; Coulee Country Excavating LLC; County Materials; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; La Crosse Fireplace Company; Marvin Windows & Doors; Midwest TV & Appliance; Pons Countertops LLC; River City Landscape, Inc.; River City Ready Mix; Select Trusses & Lumber, Inc.; Sherwin-Williams; Xcel Energy, Inc.



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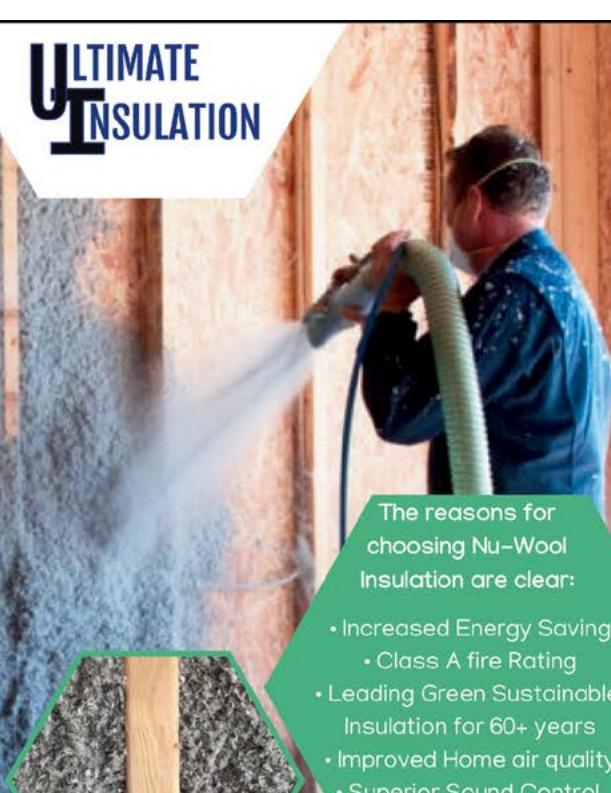
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## HOME 6

711 GRAND GLEN CT., ONALASKA - GRANDVIEW ESTATES  
6 BEDROOMS | 4.5 BATHS | 4,948 SQ FT

## MAZZOLA CONSTRUCTION & CONSULTING LLC

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2023

This exquisite home is designed for both everyday family life and sophisticated entertaining. Step into the heart of the home—a spacious gourmet European kitchen that is truly a chef's dream. A butler's pantry keeps preparation discreetly tucked away, allowing guests to comfortably enjoy the expansive island, the inviting great room or the sun-drenched sunroom.

The main level exudes warmth and elegance, featuring beautiful 10-inch custom flooring, premium finishes and thoughtfully selected fixtures. Practicality meets luxury with a convenient main-floor laundry and commercial grade coffee suite. Descend to the lower level to find three cozy bedrooms and a custom bath, a fitness room with sauna, a large game room, dedicated movie space and a rec room, all offering easy access to the yard.

Mazzola Construction would like to thank the owners and our building team for the inspired yet functional design of this exceptional residence.

**LABA members used:** A+ Property Solutions; ACT Concrete, Inc.; Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Beaver Builders Supply, Inc.; Bennetts Lawncare & Landscaping; Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.; Brit Holtan Interior Design; Coulee Floors & Design; Dynamic Concrete Resurfacing LLC; Elite Excavating; Focus on Energy; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Gerrard-Hoeschler, Realtors; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; HABiTECH; Hilltopper Refuse & Recycling; HotSpring Spas & Pools of La Crosse; JBrooke Garage Door LLC; La Crosse Fireplace Company; MC Landworx; Merchants Bank; Midwest TV & Appliance; New Castle Title of La Crosse; Olson Solar Energy; Pons Countertops LLC; ProVantage Painting; Schneider Heating & Air Conditioning; Select Trusses & Lumber, Inc.; Sherwin-Williams; Simplified Water LLC; Stetter Electric; TDS Telecom; TP Plumbing; Ultimate Insulation LAX LLC; Xcel Energy, Inc.



JOHN MAZZOLA

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mazzolacc@gmail.com

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## HOME 7

825 CRESTWOOD LN., ONALASKA - CRESTWOOD ESTATES  
4 BEDROOMS | 2.5 BATHS | 3,716 SQ FT

## MAZZOLA CONSTRUCTION & CONSULTING LLC

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2023



JOHN MAZZOLA  
608-780-8537  
mazzolacc@gmail.com  
www.mazzolacc.com



Discover modern living at its finest in this beautiful walkout rambler nestled on a serene wooded lot. This fantastic executive home offers a spacious and functional layout, designed to be open and airy on both levels with an abundance of natural light in every room.

The heart of this home is the impressive kitchen, with a large island, dining nook, ample counter space and modern finishes. A dedicated home office provides the ideal space for remote work.

The lower level extends the living space with heated floors, a welcoming family room, a convenient wet bar and a thoughtfully designed craft room. Outdoor living is a delight with a large front deck, perfect for relaxing, and a smaller, covered three-season room in the back for more intimate enjoyment.

Mazzola Construction extends a warm thank-you to our building team and our customers for making this stunning home a reality. Come explore this exceptional property!

**LABA members used:** A+ Property Solutions; ACT Concrete, Inc.; Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Beaver Builders Supply, Inc.; Bennetts Lawncare & Landscaping; Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.; Brit Holtan Interior Design; Coulee Floors & Design; Dynamic Concrete Resurfacing LLC; Elite Excavating; Focus on Energy; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Gerrard-Hoeschler, Realtors; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; HABITECH; Hidden Valley Designs, Inc.; Hilltopper Refuse & Recycling; HotSpring Spas & Pools of La Crosse; JBrooke Garage Door LLC; La Crosse Fireplace Company; MC Landworx; Merchants Bank; Midwest TV & Appliance; New Castle Title of La Crosse; Pons Countertops LLC; ProVantage Painting; Schneider Heating & Air Conditioning; Select Trusses & Lumber, Inc.; Sherwin-Williams; Simplified Water LLC; Stetter Electric; TDS Telecom; TP Plumbing; Ultimate Insulation LAX LLC; Xcel Energy, Inc.

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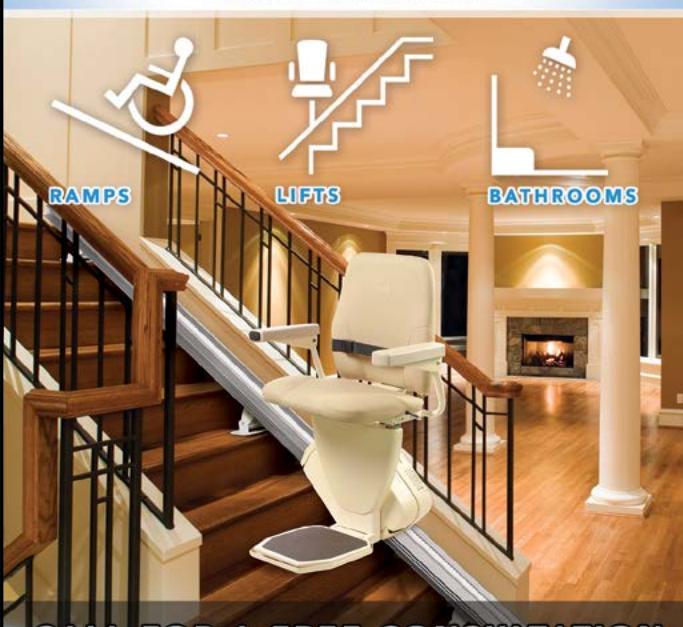


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**HOME 8** W1050 COUNTY RD. P, COON VALLEY  
5 BEDROOMS | 3.5 BATHS | 5,368 SQ FT

## COLEMAN CUSTOM HOMES LLC

LABA MEMBER SINCE 2019

This new, beautifully crafted five-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom home blends luxury and function in a peaceful rural setting. The spacious great room features vaulted wood ceilings with false beams, a stone fireplace with built-ins and a 12-foot bifold patio door leading to a vaulted screened porch with cedar ceiling, perfect for relaxing or entertaining.

The amazing kitchen boasts custom cabinets, quartz countertops, a hidden walk-in pantry and a beverage center. The mudroom includes built-in lockers, a dog dish station and a main-level laundry.

The main-floor primary suite offers a spa-like retreat with a custom tile shower, soaker tub, double vanity, private toilet room and a walk-in closet with custom shelving. Two additional main-level bedrooms share a full bath, plus there's a convenient guest half-bath.

Enjoy a three-car garage with a dog wash station and basement access. Downstairs includes a family room with a fireplace, wet bar, office, exercise room, bedroom, bathroom and two storage rooms.

This home has everything: space, style and craftsmanship. Perfect for family living and entertaining!



**DAVE COLEMAN**

507-259-4931

colemancustomhomes@gmail.com



**LABA members used:** Altra Federal Credit Union; Balduzzi's; Berger Plumbing LLC; Beyer Custom Cabinets, LTD; Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.; Builders Flooring, Inc.; Coulee Country Excavating LLC; County Materials; Gerhard's Kitchen Bath & Lighting; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; La Crosse Fireplace Company; Marvin Windows & Doors; Midwest TV & Appliance; River City Ready Mix; Select Trusses & Lumber, Inc.; Sherwin-Williams; Town n' Country Title LLC

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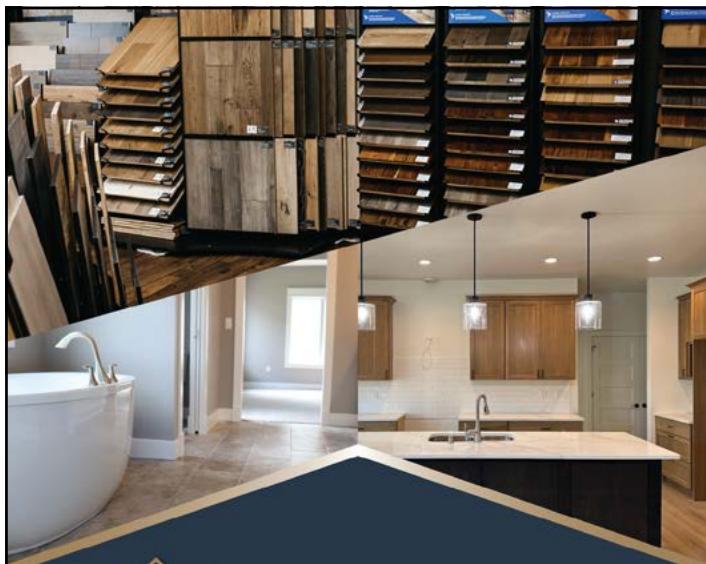


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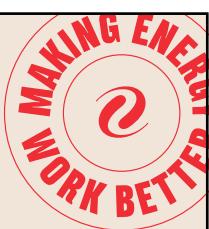


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Using the inspiration of a single photograph, Mazzola Construction created a home for Dave and Julie Snyder that maximizes the views from Rim of the City Road and earned the LABA 2024 Parade of Homes People's Choice award.

## BUILDING BY THE BARN

**Location tipped the scales for Dave and Julie Snyder and their Mazzola-built 2024 Parade of Homes winner.**

BY HEIDI BLANKE | PHOTOS BY HAZEL MEDIA

You might think this article is about the 2024 La Crosse Area Builders Association People's Choice winner, but it's really about a horse. A horse named Pomegranate, to be exact.

### ROOM TO ROAM

Dave and Julie Snyder (he's a Gerrard-Hoeschler real estate agent and she's a retired travel agent) began their hunt for the perfect lot seven years ago; at the time, it was with the idea of housing Pomegranate on their own land. "We were looking for a horse property, not to build. We had a nice house just two miles from here," Dave says.

Instead, they found a lot on Rim of the City Road across the street from their current boarding facility. Julie pointed to a rustic painting of a barn, somewhat incongruous with the home's modern aesthetic. "It's the reason that we even chose this location. My horse is at the barn. She's been there for 12 years, and I wanted to be closer, so now I can just walk across the street. I'm living my dream."

### MAKING THE MOST OF THE VIEW

John Mazzola of Mazzola Construction and Consulting took on the job of transforming a single inspiration photo to physical reality. "We aimed to create a home

that optimized the bluff views of the Coulee Region while offering unique spaces for entertaining and maintaining its coziness," Mazzola says.

From the front door (after a welcome from dog Minie) the expansive view carries across the entry to a wall of windows in Dave's office. "We rearranged this house a million times before we got this particular layout," Dave says. At one point, the office space was a laundry room.

"I didn't want to waste the view," Julie adds.

Mazzola says custom work that began with the office desk, crafted with cherry



Custom features that make the home stand out include a floating staircase with bespoke iron railing (left) and the stunning wood wall art in the office (center), which conceals a functional Murphy bed to accommodate guests on the main level of the home.

accents, led to the creation of a stunning, functional piece of wall art that cleverly conceals a Murphy bed.

Julie's mom sleeps there when she visits so she can avoid the stairs she'd need to get to a lower-level guest room. Pocket doors close the room for privacy.

A short hall leads to the kitchen and great room, passing the laundry room on the way, complete with its own broom closet. Julie jokes that it is her upgrade from having the vacuum in with her coats.

From the great room, a sliding glass door opens onto the deck and features an even more encompassing panorama. "In the winter you have a better view," says Julie. "There's a space below that's shaded, so we'll use that in the summer." As this is their first full summer in the house, they hope to get plenty of use from their newly purchased patio furniture.

#### DEVOTED TO THE DETAILS

Dave points to a magazine photo on the wall. "That was the inspiration for the house," he says. At first glance, it's hard to tell the difference between the photo and the actual exterior.

Photos and internet pictures inspired numerous details. "It's nice that you can give people pictures and have them reproduce something," Julie says of the relationship with Mazzola. The countertop and backsplashes contain visible veining. "I like the dramatic look," she says.

However, it's the ironwork stair railing and adjacent wall that capture attention. Mazzola says the floating staircase involved

working with a local steel expert for its 1,000-pound single frame design. "We then crafted custom 4-inch stair treads with hidden accent lighting and commissioned a bespoke iron railing," he notes.

The steps themselves are maple, as is much of the woodwork, and all handmade, giving the house an artisanal vibe. The 18-foot wall next to the stairs rises to the ceiling with dozens of Grateful Dead concert posters, meticulously hung with Mazzola's assistance. "Those are all posters from shows I went to," says Dave, a dedicated Deadhead.

"That was the most stressful thing of the whole decorating process," Julie says. "How are we going to know how to arrange those pictures?" An artist friend came to their aid for the poster placement, and Mazzola used scaffolding to hang them over the course of two days.

Dave smiles and adds, "We have no idea how we'll get them down. They'll stay with the house."

The remainder of the first floor contains the master bedroom with his-and-hers closets and a spacious ensuite bathroom with a European walk-in shower, lavatory closet, free-standing soaking tub and under-cabinet lighting; a pocket door closes it all off.

#### LOWER-LEVEL LIVING

The stairs lead to a walk-out ground floor with two guest bedrooms and two bathrooms (one for their grown son when he visits).

"All our family is from out of town," Julie says. For the most part, the furniture on this level, as opposed to the main floor, is not

new. "Everything down here is from our other house," Dave says.

The unfinished part of this level sports a second washer and dryer used mainly for Julie and Pomegranate's laundry. Steps from the garage allow direct access without tracking evidence of the barn through the main part of the home. It's the floor in this part of the house that garnered attention, though. "Dave did the floor himself. The house was so wonderful, and the cement down here has been stained and crackled," Julie explains. The finished floor resembles an old-style linoleum.

"It's paint and some flecks and an enormous amount of work," Dave says.

"But it looks great," Julie continues. "It really elevated it."

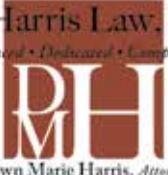
#### LIVING LOCALLY

The Snyders made a point of buying as locally as they could, often saving money in the process. "Everything is sourced as local as we can because I'm a Realtor and that money stays here in our community, which is very important to me," Dave says.

The house suits the entire family. Julie and Pomegranate are within a block of each other, Dave works with an impressive view at his fingertips and Minie has run of the secured yard. A sign at the front door sums it all up. It reads, "Life is better on the bluff." **CRW**

*Heidi Griminger Blanke is a La Crosse area writer and, while not a horse person, fully understands the connection between people and their animal companions. She also strongly practices shopping locally.*

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Chef Luke Zahm and The Driftless Café, which he owns with his wife, Ruthie, are among the area's advocates for farm-to-table cuisine, focused on using in-season, locally sourced ingredients for an ever-changing menu.

## Harvesting the Character of the Driftless

**Luke and Ruthie Zahm lean into “local” to bring farm-to-table flavors and a sense of community to Viroqua.**

BY MARTHA KEEFFE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The staff at The Driftless Café, located in downtown Viroqua, works to continually reimagine what it means to serve locally sourced organic cuisine. Along with his team, co-owner and chef Luke Zahm challenges the stereotype that midwestern food is limited to meat, potatoes and anything fried. “There’s a perception that we’re a homogenized culture,” Zahm says, describing how people often view the region’s culinary landscape. Therefore, he and his wife, Ruthie, have dedicated themselves to offering fresh, local dishes that break away from this outdated notion and instead showcase the unexpected diversity of midwestern flavors.

### HOW DID THE DRIFTLESS CAFÉ COME TO BE?

“At the time, we were living in Madison, and it was Luke’s dream to own a restaurant,” explains Ruthie Zahm, who is the majority owner and general manager of the café. Having been raised on homemade meals made with local ingredients, Luke was eager to combine his passions for cooking and community with “products that put the spotlight on the Midwest farmer.” The abundance of fresh, organic products in the Viroqua area, where both Luke and Ruthie grew up, sparked a desire to pack up their three children and move home. After a series of unexpected events enabled them

to purchase a local café, they opened The Driftless Café in 2013, where Luke’s vision “to see what’s possible through food” could be realized.

### CREATING A VISION

One key ingredient used to make the Zahms’ vision for The Driftless Café work is farm-to-table practices. Farm-to-table, which has steadily grown in popularity as diners look for healthier food options, refers to serving food that comes directly from a specific source without passing through stores, markets or distributors. For example, vegetables grown in a home garden or purchased at a local farmers’ market and

then prepared and served at home qualify as farm-to-table. Likewise, restaurants like The Driftless Café that obtain products in the same manner and use them in their dishes embody this same principle.

“We try to use in-season products that are grown and produced within 100 miles of the restaurant,” emphasizes Ruthie, who is committed to supporting as many local farmers as possible (check the restaurant’s website for an extensive list). “I’d say at least 68 percent of what we buy comes from within those 100 miles.” Due to its unique topography, rich soil and access to reliable water sources, Vernon County is home to over 200 certified organic farmers, which makes it easy to find a diverse range of fresh, local products.

“As for the off season, we do canning and preserving,” adds Ruthie. “And there are Amish farmers who have year-round greenhouses, so it’s possible to keep locally sourced produce on the menu.” From vegetables to maple syrup to pork and beef



Ruthie and Luke Zahm want The Driftless Café to feed not only physical hunger, but the human need for community.

purchased from local FFA members, as well as mushrooms gathered by foragers, the incredible variety of ingredients inspires the staff to create a dynamic lunch and dinner menu that not only changes with the seasons but even by the day.

“However, not all of the food we serve is super serious,” laughs Luke, noting that familiar, comforting dishes like corn dogs, grilled cheese and hamburgers are included on the lunch menu to help ensure that everyone who walks through the doors of the café feels welcome. “People are starving for community, and we want to meet them where they are at,” explains Luke, who understands the role food plays in connecting people. “I want to offer food that speaks to the ethos of the people.”

#### A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

In that light, the appeal of The Driftless Café goes beyond its food. “We have a strong group of people with the same vision,” says Ruthie of her employees, many of whom

balance their work at the café with school, other jobs or single parenthood. “And I feel like it is part of my job and responsibility to empower them.”

It is because of this philosophy that the café fosters an environment where mutual respect for diverse perspectives, fresh ideas and collaboration between staff and management is actively encouraged. It is a place where the Zahms strive to let each employee know that they fill a critical role—and it is their hope that this sentiment is felt by the customers and community they serve. “My greatest achievement is easily the fact that all the staff keep showing up, see the dream, believe in what we are doing and feel proud of what they do with us,” says Ruthie when asked about what’s behind the success of the café. “The people. Always the people.” **CRW**

*Martha Keeffe lives and writes in La Crosse. Not only is she looking forward to dining at The Driftless Café, she's anxious to check out their new beer garden!*



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Flower the Skunk helps Kathy KasaKaitas share the story of Coulee Region Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation program.

## She's a Coulee Region Scent-sation!

**Flower the Skunk brings awareness to wildlife rehabilitation as a Coulee Region Humane Society educational ambassador.**

BY MACKENZIE R. HANSON | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Obtained at a month old, Flower the Skunk travels to schools, summer camps and various other events in the Coulee Region as an educational ambassador for the Coulee Region Humane Society (CRHS) Wildlife Rehabilitation program. In tow is her handler, Kathy KasaKaitas, who is the animal control supervisor and advanced animal rehabilitator at the facility. The rehabilitation of skunks is illegal in Wisconsin, so when Flower first came to the facility, KasaKaitas immediately applied for her to become an educational ambassador for the shelter. The pair aim to educate children and adults in the Coulee Region about skunks, animal welfare, rehabilitation and how the region can help support the local wildlife and domestic animals the shelter aids.

As an educational ambassador, Flower is a campaigner for the assorted services offered through the wildlife rehabilitation program. There are different levels of rehabilitation, and each species requires a specific license in Wisconsin. CRHS currently provides rehabilitation services for waterfowl, squirrels, rodents, songbirds, rabbits, opossums, ducklings, bats (with restrictions), pigeons and raptors—excluding eagles. Flower and her team anticipate that the program will be licensed to rehabilitate bobcats and foxes soon.

### ALWAYS STINKIN' BUSY

Baby season falls between April and September, and during this period, Flower sees hundreds of furry and feathered friends come through the facilities she represents. Each animal that requires rehabilitation enters the program with the goal of being released back into the wild. Having recently had her fifth birthday, Flower has seen many orphaned, injured or ill animals come through the facility to be released.

With 16 years of experience at the facility, KasaKaitas has provided her fair share of animals with rehabilitation services. KasaKaitas notes that “when you let them go, you know

that you've made a difference, but sometimes it's bittersweet. You never know what will happen to them afterward. It's nature.”

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

To provide services to local wildlife in need, Flower, KasaKaitas and the Wildlife Rehabilitation team rely on the Coulee Region's support. “One thing the community may not be aware of is that even though we are a part of the Coulee Region Humane Society, we are funded separately,” says KasaKaitas. “The money raised or donated to the shelter stays with the shelter



KasaKaitas with Tater the Opossum

unless it is specifically donated for the wildlife.” The Wildlife Rehabilitation program conducts its own fundraisers, writes its own grants and attends events in the area to bring awareness to its work and mission.

With a lack of rehabbers in the area, the CRHS Wildlife Rehabilitation program is often stretched thin with resources and space. At times, the program must make the difficult decision not to take in more wildlife, especially large litters or broods, to provide the best care for the wildlife already in their care.

To help her bring awareness to those being helped at the rehabilitation facility, Flower has other educational ambassadors to assist in her efforts. Her furry friends Tater the Opossum and Amelia the Flying Squirrel also help to bring awareness to the Coulee Region. These educational ambassadors can often be seen on the CRHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Facebook page. **CRW**

*MacKenzie R. Hanson is a La Crosse-based freelance writer and artist. She is enthusiastic about every furry, fluffy or feathered animal she sees. Contact her at mackenzierhanson@gmail.com.*



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# HELP IN RUFF MOMENTS

**Mayo Clinic Health System and the La Crosse Police Department work with service and therapy dogs to enhance their care for the community.**

BY SYDNEY HEISE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



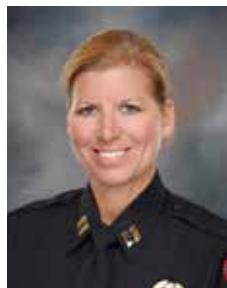
From left: Luna is a service dog who comforts patients at Mayo Clinic Health System locations in the La Crosse Area. Therapy dog Cheddar works with the La Crosse Police Department's team of school resource officers, while Hank and handlers such as executive assistant Stephanie Neises provide support to LCPD officers and staff.

**Y**ou bring a dog into the room, and it brings an element that we cannot provide as humans," says Lisa Morgan, O.T., supervisor of rehab services at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse. Since 2018, Morgan has been the handler of facility service dog Luna.

Trained in over 50 commands, Luna spends her days visiting patients and hospital staff in every department. She plays tug-of-war with patients to help them develop balance, cheers up kids who are nervous about their appointments and comforts people who have received difficult news. Morgan says Luna has become a "local celebrity" at Mayo's campuses throughout the Coulee Region.



Lisa Morgan, O.T.



Captain Avrie Schott

## A BEAUTIFUL MISSION

Dogs like Luna are professionally bred and trained through Canine Companions, a nonprofit focused on helping people with disabilities live more independently by providing service dogs free of charge. After decades working in partnership with Canine Companions, Morgan believes in the powerful impact of service dogs on individuals and communities.

Luna brings joy to people in every stage of illness and recovery—she has even sat with patients in the final moments of their lives. Her steady support and quiet

companionship have made all the difference for patients and their families. Morgan says that Luna "changes the focus and shifts the energy" for patients, and "helps people engage much more deeply" in situations that might otherwise cause worry or discomfort.

## CUDDLY COWORKERS

Luna isn't the only dog making an impact on the La Crosse community. Since 2022, the La Crosse Police Department (LCPD) has included therapy dog Cheddar in their community outreach, and a second therapy dog, Hank, joined the team in 2024.

In contrast to service dogs, who are trained to fulfill needs for people with disabilities, therapy dogs are focused on offering emotional support. Cheddar works in the broader La Crosse community, while Hank supports police department staff and officers. Both dogs were donated to the department by Blueberry Cottage Labradoodles in Osseo, Wisconsin, and local businesses donate their care and training.

Captain Avrie Schott, head of professional standards and community services for the LCPD, shares how Cheddar and Hank can "feel when a student or officer needs that extra care, and that's when they go to work."

## SERVING WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED

Cheddar spends most of his time in area schools, often responding to crises as a source of comfort for those impacted. Schott recalls a day when Cheddar visited an upset student who wouldn't come out from under a desk. Cheddar simply got under the desk, too, and he stayed there until the student was ready to move forward.

Hank's team of handlers includes field officers and department employees, allowing him to interact with a broad range of team members. One of Hank's handlers, executive assistant Stephanie Neises, describes Hank's initial shyness and the handlers' efforts to "open him up" through interaction with others. At just under a year old, Hank's playful spirit and puppylike energy light up the room. For LCPD workers facing physically and emotionally intense days, Hank provides relief and a little extra love. **CRW**

*Sydney Heise is a student and writer from La Crosse. She thoroughly enjoyed getting to hang out with cute dogs for research purposes.*



*Inspired by her mentors at Rainbow Ridge Farms, incoming Holmen High School senior Addison Wille has started her own goat herd, including her Boer wether Arnold and dairy goat Shadows.*

## The G.O.A.T of Goat Life

**Addison Wille channels her passion for goats into a business, inspired by Donna Murphy and Cindy Hoehne at Rainbow Ridge Farms.**

BY RORY GALLAGER | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**D**onna Murphy and Cindy Hoehne began their agricultural journey in 1996 with the opening of Rainbow Ridge Farms Bed & Breakfast, their escape from life in Washington, D.C. Hoehne had gone to college in the La Crosse area, and the two had come back to get away from the capital city. They stumbled into the farming world accidentally, after taking in animals from the community.

“A neighbor kid gave us two goats and said, ‘Oh, they won’t climb your porch, they won’t eat your flowers.’ We bought that hook, line and sinker,” Hoehne says.

Since then, Murphy and Hoehne have expanded Rainbow Ridge Farms to include not only a B&B, but also a safe place for various farm animals to stay and be well loved. Today, the farm includes the B&B, farm camp, goat herds for 4-H members and an additional six goat herds boarded in the rural Onalaska location.

about kids learning what they are and about what they want to do.”

### THE NEXT GENERATION

One of those kids whom Murphy and Hoehne took under their wings is Addison Wille. Wille’s parents had met the two women at a fair, where Murphy and Hoehne were showing goats. Wille has remained involved with Rainbow Ridge Farms and the world of goats ever since she was a little girl. Now, 17 years old and on her way to entering her senior year at Holmen High School, she looks after her own herd of goats.

To Wille, Murphy and Hoehne have become mentors during her time at Rainbow Ridge, and the camps offered gave her a head start when it came to dealing with goats. Fueled by her passion for animals, Wille joined 4-H with Murphy and Hoehne to show goats at the local county fair and has expanded well beyond that in recent years. She has also been selected to be a member of the 2025-2026 Wisconsin Agriculture Youth Council and is part of the Holmen FFA. During the off season of showing goats, Wille participates in Holmen High’s show choir, along with track and field.

### CREATING THE FUTURE WITH GOATS

Murphy and Hoehne started their goat project after witnessing two people showing goats at the county fair. They introduce the passion of goats to the community and strive to make it fun for everyone. A summer day camp includes children ages 7 to 12 and has roughly 30 kids a week. Most kids in their youth goat projects are girls. Murphy and Hoehne use their youth programs to teach kids the power of responsibility, while also encouraging the kids to be themselves. At Rainbow Ridge Farms, they don’t judge others and instead focus on creating a brighter future.

“You change the future by teaching the children,” Murphy says. “I’m very passionate



*Rainbow Ridge Farms welcomes young people to learn about caring for and showing goats.*



Owners Donna Murphy, left, and Cindy Hoehne, third from left, are active with statewide tourism efforts, including hosting Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers at the farm/B&B.

"I would love to be a large-animal veterinarian," Wille says. "Right now, I'm planning on going to a four-year college for an animal science major."

Showing her goats also benefits Wille's future as she develops her growing herd and business, Double Back Goats. "By showing these goats," Wille explains, "I'm able to receive accolades based on their conformation to the ADGA (American Dairy Goat Association) breed standard. This in turn makes their genetics more valuable." The shows for Wille's goats occur on the weekends, while she has various daily routines to help keep them in performance shape. It typically involves a lot of work that keeps her busy, and she's learning how to balance the work between school, the goats and her extracurriculars. Spending time with her friends and boyfriend can be a challenge, yet Wille wouldn't trade her goats for anything.

## FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS

Wille continues to spread the warmth of Rainbow Ridge Farms, paving the way for those who might hope to follow in her path. She is a judge for the goat summer camps held at the farms based on her own experience and helps deliver the goats' babies. The other kids look up to her as she helps out with the younger kids and teaches them.

"She is constantly giving back to the kids," Murphy says.

To those who plan to take on the responsibility of showing goats, Wille happily offers some insight to thrive in the community. "Find someone to learn from," she says, "I'm very grateful that I had Cindy and Donna, but I know that there are so many people in the industry who are willing to teach the youth." Wille also highly suggests going on Facebook, making those connections and reaching out to people. CRW

*La Crosse native Rory Gallagher is attending Hamline University with a major in creative writing and a minor in editing and publishing. She is notoriously known for preferring to stay indoors, but occasionally she can be persuaded to take a step outside.*

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# NOT YOUR NORMAL BACKYARD

Local couples maximize their spaces to go beyond the typical garden.

BY JAN WELLIK | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Alex Pehling, left, and her husband, Greg, have turned their La Crosse yard into an example of permaculture gardening: layering trees, bushes, groundcover and even chickens to maximize the productivity of their small space. Joanne and Terry Mihm also find ways to get more from their suburban lot, gradually adding gardens, orchards, chickens and bee hives and even tapping maple trees from their own and friends' front yards.

**N**ot every aspirational farmer or forester has vast acres to work with. Two local couples shared with us how they get the most from their urban landscape.

## FOREST GARDENING IN THE CITY

Alex Pehling and her husband, Greg, of La Crosse, created their backyard forest garden based on permaculture principles of stacking heights: tall overstory trees, an understory layer of smaller fruit trees, vines, then shorter bushes and plants, on down to below the ground (rhizomes, tubers, and bulbs) interspersed with perennial flowers.

Their small city lot is filled with abundance: 25 fruit trees, nearly 30 mature bushes that produce berries (think gooseberries, elderberries and currants) and rhubarb, asparagus and strawberries as ground cover.

"This is the first year where we have removed every stitch of grass," explains

Pehling. Almost one-third of the lot used to be a gravel parking lot. She had to break up the compacted soil with a sledgehammer to start. Twenty-five years later, the once-challenging soil is now rich earth thanks to the "chop and drop" method (cutting weeds and letting them decay into the soil where they fall) and plants with long taproots to help break up the soil.

## THINK ZONES

"The zone closest to your house is usually your veggie garden," Pehling says. "You can just zip out your back door and harvest vegetables." Zones further from the house include the mini-orchard and chicken coop.

New additions to the yard fill multiple uses. Plum trees will eventually arch over the patio as a living roof; a goji berry vine creates shade for the chickens; native plants attract pollinators, which help keep the fruit trees pollinated; and chickens till the soil, add nitrogen and provide eggs.

## WORKING WITH NATURE

Natural decomposition helps the garden function naturally like a forest floor. "We add heavy mulch yearly and chop up fallen leaves, branches and green plants to add back to the soil, and we throw our kitchen and garden scraps to the chickens, who can turn a big pile of weeds into soil in a short amount of time," she explains.

### PRINCIPLES OF PERMACULTURE:

- Cover every inch of bare ground with plants or mulch to capture water by preventing runoff and erosion.
- Create zones with the most labor intensive spaces closest to the home.
- Encourage natural decomposition with "chop and drop" and composting.
- Make sure everything has multiple uses or serves multiple needs.

"The type of gardening that I'm doing now is based on the introduction to the natural world I had as a kid, spending time in wild spaces and nature," she explains, crediting her mother, who was a master gardener, and grandfather, who was an outdoorsman.

"It's a lot of work putting things in and designing it," she admits. "But once it's mature, you don't have much weeding, and the plants are just on their natural cycle of bearing fruit." Like a forest, everything is perennial and maintains itself.

## A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING

On their suburban lot in Holmen, Joanne and Terry Mihm have spent the last 14 years adding on little by little to what they harvest each year.

The garden is a family endeavor when it comes to weeding, collecting produce, canning and freezing, according to Mihm, but new inspiration often comes from Terry's ideas and research.

Their current production includes eight chickens, a raised-bed vegetable garden, an orchard, beehives and maple syrup, along with 10 to 15 apple trees. Their garden is on an automated drip system for watering lettuce, swiss chard, peas, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage and more.

Last year they purchased two beehives, which produced honey. Sadly, the bees didn't make it through the winter, so with



#### FAMILY GARDENING PROGRESSION:

- Vegetable garden
- Fruit orchard
- Chickens
- Pollinator-friendly wildflowers
- Automated irrigation
- Bee hives
- Maple syrup

the help of friends, they started new hives for this year. The bees, gardens and orchards are a natural complement for each other.

#### TAPPING NEW RESOURCES

This year the Mihms tapped local maple trees and made maple syrup with 20 taps at friends' and families' houses around town. They boiled 40 gallons of sap, which took a full day. They also make wine from juice given to them by friends who grow grapes, and beer from grains and kits.

In 2025, they started planting bee-friendly flowers and added pear trees. They also made hard apple cider for the first time.

"It's nice to grow your own food and know where it comes from," Mihm says. CRW

*Jan Wellik is a writer, poet and environmental educator in the La Crosse area with a desire to help build a sustainable future while inspiring creativity at [www.EcoExpressions.org](http://www.EcoExpressions.org).*

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## ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Allyson Servais

### SERVAIS NAMED VIROQUA CHAMBER DIRECTOR

The Viroqua Chamber of Commerce has named Allyson Servais as its executive director; she took on the role June 23.

Servais is a native of Coon Valley with more than a decade of experience in nonprofit leadership, education and community engagement. She most recently served as international relations education coordinator for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, managing global programming and international leadership development. Prior to that, she spent several years at Gundersen Medical Foundation in La Crosse.

She holds a master's degree in organization leadership from St. Mary's University of Minnesota and a bachelor's in sport management and sociology from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

*Accomplishments is a paid section featuring your business or organization. Call 608-783-5395 or e-mail [info@crwmagazine.com](mailto:info@crwmagazine.com) for more information.*



Dawn Wacek

### WACEK TO LEAD LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dawn Wacek was recently appointed as director of the La Crosse Public Library. Wacek has over 24 years of library experience with 18 of those years in management roles. She has been with La Crosse Public Library since 2016, first as youth services manager and most recently as the deputy director.

Wacek took on her new role as the library entered its busy summer programming season and began an exciting building renovation.

The La Crosse Public Library provides collections access and programming at two locations, with the mission "Discover, create, connect."

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PHOTOGRAPHY

www.KaciaWilhelmPhotography.com

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# Boho Is Back

Claim this laid-back style as your own.

BY ELISE WEINBENDER | PHOTOS BY KACIA WILHELM PHOTOGRAPHY

Once the signature style of the '60s and '70s, bohemian fashion is finding new life this season. From breezy silhouettes to flowing fringe and natural textures, today's boho revival is all about relaxed elegance with a modern edge. Here's how we're styling the laid-back look for fall.

## Eclectic Aesthetic

Festival fashion meets everyday life with this layered look from **Keeper Goods Co.** An open-knit sweater and flare jeans are the perfect base for a look that feels like you. Add personality with beaded jewelry, an oversized tote and, of course, your favorite four-legged sidekick.

Delivered sweater, \$48; Devil's Lake jean, \$62; Double Zero tank, \$12; purse, \$58; Sunski sunglasses, \$58; necklaces, \$27 & \$20; Cecelia Jewelry earrings, \$28; Hemlock Goods bandana, \$17. Dolce Vita sneakers from **Shiny Objects**, \$139.

Modeled by Tessa Solberg and her therapy dog, Scout.





In 2025, the boho-chic revival has a fresh take, balancing grunge and romance. Start with flowy basics, then add contrast with a structured denim vest from **Shiny Objects**. A dusty pink purse and strappy sandals complete the look, striking a balance between carefree and curated.

Lucky Brand dress, \$129; Free People vest, \$98;  
Free People sandals, \$78; Hobo purse, \$292; Scout earrings, \$24.

*Modeled by Tessa Solberg.*

## Desert Rose



A boho wardrobe blooms in warm, earthy tones—taupe, blush and sun-washed orange. Start with a statement: This floral denim jacket from **Shiny Objects** centers the look around vintage charm. Bold coral sunglasses and faux leather accessories add a modern feel to a classic style.

Free People jacket, \$148; Free People tank, \$40;  
Free People purse, \$78; Free People flats, \$128;  
Free People jean, \$128; Powder Design sunglasses, \$45;  
Free People belt, \$58; Seeds necklace, \$20;  
Scout bracelet, \$29; Seeds earrings, \$20.

*Modeled by Elise Weinbender.*

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# Community Calendar

## ONGOING EVENTS

**American Association of University Women (AAUW)** 2nd Sat. (Sept.-May), 9:30 a.m., [aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com](mailto:aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com), [lacrosse-wi.aauw.net](http://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net).

**CheezLand Uke Band**, Wed., 6-8 p.m., Moose Lodge, 1932 Ward Ave., [cheezland.info@gmail.com](mailto:cheezland.info@gmail.com), [www.cheezlandukeband.com](http://www.cheezlandukeband.com).

**Coulee Country Embroiderers Chapter of EGA** 2nd Mon. (Sept.-June), 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Our Redeemer Parish Hall, La Crosse, <https://tinyurl.com/egacc>.

**Coulee Region Toastmasters Club** 1st and 3rd Mon., noon-1 p.m., Goodwill, La Crosse.

**Holmen Area Rotary Club**, Wed., 7 a.m., Holmen Community Center, [holmenrotary@outlook.com](mailto:holmenrotary@outlook.com).

**La Crosse Area Genealogical Society**

4th Tues. (Sept.-May), 6-7:30 p.m., La Crosse Public Library, [lacrosseags@gmail.com](mailto:lacrosseags@gmail.com).

**La Crosse Area Quilters** 4th Tues., 6:30 p.m., Stoney Creek Hotel-Conference Center, Onalaska, [www.lacrosseareaquilters.org](http://www.lacrosseareaquilters.org).

**La Crosse Area Retired Educators Luncheon**, 1st Thurs. Sept.-Dec. and March-June, 11:30 a.m., Cedar Creek Country Club, [lacrosserea@gmail.com](mailto:lacrosserea@gmail.com).

**La Crosse-Bantry Friendship Association** 4th Wed., 5:30 p.m., La Crosse Eagles Club, [www.lacrossebantry.org](http://www.lacrossebantry.org).

**La Crosse Lions**, 2nd and 4th Wed., 6:30 p.m., Lunda Center, Western Technical College; [www.lacrosselions.org](http://www.lacrosselions.org).

**La Crosse Rotary** Thurs., noon-1 p.m., Cargill Room, Waterfront Restaurant, [www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org](http://www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org).

**La Crosse Rotary East** Mon., noon-1 p.m., Radisson, La Crosse, [www.lacrosserotaryeast.org](http://www.lacrosserotaryeast.org).

**La Crosse Toastmasters Club** 2nd and 4th Tues., 7 p.m., La Crosse County Administrative Building, 212 6th St. N., Room 100, La Crosse, [411.toastmastersclubs.org](http://411.toastmastersclubs.org).

**League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area** monthly programs, Sept. - April, [www.lwvlacrosse.org](http://www.lwvlacrosse.org).

### NAMI Support Groups

See [namilacrossecounty.org/support](http://namilacrossecounty.org/support) for programs, times and locations.

**Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary** Wed., noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, Onalaska.

**Rotary After Hours**, 2nd and 4th Tues., 6 p.m., The Main Event Center, La Crosse, [www.rotaryafterhours.org](http://www.rotaryafterhours.org).

**Valley View Rotary**, Wed., 7:30-8:30 a.m., La Crosse Family YMCA-Houser Branch, Onalaska, [www.valleyviewrotary.com](http://www.valleyviewrotary.com).

**Viroqua Toastmasters Club** 2nd and 4th Thurs., 7-8:30 p.m., Vernon Memorial Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, Viroqua.

**Women with Purpose**, 2nd Wed., 11:45-1 p.m., La Crosse County Club, 300 Marcou Road, Onalaska, [crwwpwi.org](http://crwwpwi.org).

If your organization would like to be included in our Community Calendar, please contact us at [editor@crwmagazine.com](mailto:editor@crwmagazine.com) or call 608-783-5395.

## CALENDAR EVENTS

### AUGUST

**Aug. 3**, Holmen Area Historical Society Old-Fashioned Pie and Ice Cream Social, 1-3 p.m., Yahnke's Antique Green, Holmen, [www.holmencc.org](http://www.holmencc.org).

**Aug. 6**, Ryan Howe, La Crescent Live, 5:30 p.m., 322 S. 1st St., La Crescent, [www.lacrescentlive.org](http://www.lacrescentlive.org).

**Aug. 7-9**, Downtown La Crosse Sidewalk Sale, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Aug. 7-9**, Ashley for the Arts, Arcadia, [www.ashleyforthearts.com](http://www.ashleyforthearts.com).

**Aug. 8-10**, Irishfest La Crosse, South Side Fest Grounds, [www.irishfestlacrosse.org](http://www.irishfestlacrosse.org).

**Aug. 9**, Book Circle at the Hamlin Garland Homestead, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 357 W. Garland St., West Salem, [www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org).

**Aug. 9**, Mansions and Memories trolley tours, 9:15 a.m., Explore La Crosse Office, 123 7th St. S., [www.lchshistory.org](http://www.lchshistory.org).

**Aug. 10**, Big Creek Church fundraiser, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., 5188 County Highway BC, Sparta, [www.facebook.com/TheBigCreekChurch](http://www.facebook.com/TheBigCreekChurch).

**Aug. 15-16**, Holmen Kornfest, Holmen, [www.facebook.com/HolmenLionsClub](http://www.facebook.com/HolmenLionsClub).

**Aug. 15-17**, ORA Trails Fest mountain biking event, Hixon Forest trails, [www.oratrailsfest.com](http://www.oratrailsfest.com).

**Aug. 16**, 38th Annual Winona Jazz Festival, noon-5 p.m., LaCanne Park Pavilion, [www.visitwinona.com/festival/winona-jazz-festival](http://www.visitwinona.com/festival/winona-jazz-festival).



### ▼ Aug. 16, Feral Apparel Fashion Show

5 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, [www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026](http://www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026).

**Aug. 19**, *Saw: The Musical*, 7 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts Veterans Studio Theatre, [www.webercenterarts.org/events-ticket](http://www.webercenterarts.org/events-ticket).

**Aug. 21-24**, LABA Parade of Homes, 4-8 p.m. Thurs. & Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat. & Sun., various locations, [www.labaparadeofhomes.com](http://www.labaparadeofhomes.com).

**Aug. 22**, The Righteous Brothers Lovin' Feelin' Farewell Tour, 7:30 p.m., [www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center](http://www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center).

**Aug. 22-23**, *Mary Poppins Jr.*, 7 p.m. Fri., 2 p.m. Sat., La Crescent-Hokah Schools Fine Arts Center, [www.appleseedtheater.com](http://www.appleseedtheater.com).

**Aug. 23**, Coon Valley Heritage Day, Coon Valley Veterans Memorial Park, <https://www.facebook.com/share/19uo8v1hPW/>.

**Aug. 23**, Concert on the Lawn: Fly Casual, 6-8 p.m., Old Main Cultural Center, Galesville, [www.oldmaingalesville.org](http://www.oldmaingalesville.org).

**Aug. 22-24**, Great River Folk Festival, Riverside Park, La Crosse, [www.greatriverfolkfest.org](http://www.greatriverfolkfest.org).

**Aug. 28**, History on the River: Tales of Local River Rats, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., Cal Fremling Cruise Boat, Winona Levee, [www.winonahistory.org](http://www.winonahistory.org).

**Aug. 28**, Mississippi Sippin' Concert Series, Steam Machine, 5-8 p.m., Minnesota Marine Art Museum, [www.mmam.org](http://www.mmam.org).

**Aug. 31**, 11th Annual Home Run for Recovery 10k/5k run, 8 a.m., Copeland Park/Logger Field, [www.couleerecovery.org/home-run](http://www.couleerecovery.org/home-run).

### SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 3-7**, Elvis Explosion, La Crosse Center, [www.kingexplosion.com](http://www.kingexplosion.com).

**Sept. 5-6**, Big Muddy Brew 'N Que, noon-10 p.m., Levee Park, Winona, [www.bigmuddybrewnque.com](http://www.bigmuddybrewnque.com).

**Sept. 6**, Bernadette Peters, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo University Fine Arts Center, [www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center](http://www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center).

**Sept. 7**, Twilight Tour and Dinner, 5 p.m., Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center, [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org).

### ► Sept. 10, Amara Rose Foundation

#### Remembrance Walk, 7 p.m.,

Vernon County Fairgrounds,

[www.amararosefoundation.org](http://www.amararosefoundation.org).

**Sept. 10**, Dave Marck and Friends

present Always, 7:30 p.m.

Viterbo University Fine Arts Center, [www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center](http://www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center).

### Sept. 11-14, Every Brilliant Thing

by Grey Area Productions, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Pump House Regional Arts Center, [www.thepumphouse.org/grey-area-productions](http://www.thepumphouse.org/grey-area-productions).

**Sept. 11**, History on the River: Fur Traders of the Upper Mississippi River, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., Cal Fremling Cruise Boat, Winona Levee, [www.winonahistory.org](http://www.winonahistory.org).

**Sept. 12**, Sons of Serendip, 7:30 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts-Lyche Theatre, [www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center](http://www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center).

**Sept. 12**, Whose Live Anyway?, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo University Fine Arts Center, [www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center](http://www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center).

**Sept. 13**, 20th annual Steppin' Out in Pink, Riverside Park, La Crosse, [steppinoutinpink.donordrive.com](http://steppinoutinpink.donordrive.com).

**Sept. 13-14**, Mighty River Art Studio Tour, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., self-guided tour, [www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026](http://www.thepumphouse.org/performing-arts-2025-2026).

**Sept. 13-14**, Garland Days speaker, auction, tours, 10 a.m. 3- p.m. Sat. and 1-3 p.m. Sun. Hamlin Garland House, 357 Garland St., West Salem, [www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org).

**Sept. 14**, River City Corvette Club Car Show, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Palmer Lewis Octagon House grounds, W3362 State Hwy. 16, West Salem, [www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.westsalemhistoricalsociety.org).

**Sept. 19**, Salsa in the Streets with River City Dancers, 6-11 p.m., downtown Winona, [www.rivercitydancers.org/event/salsa-in-the-street-2025](http://www.rivercitydancers.org/event/salsa-in-the-street-2025).

**Sept. 19-21**, Applefest USA, La Crescent, [www.applefestusa.com](http://www.applefestusa.com).

**Sept. 19-20**, Letters from Max, 7:30 p.m., The LEAP Center at Weber Center for the Performing Arts, [www.lacrossetheatre.org](http://www.lacrossetheatre.org).

**Sept. 19**, Bachtoberfest, 7:30 p.m., Cappella Performing Arts Center, [www.lacrossesymphony.org](http://www.lacrossesymphony.org).

**Sept. 20**, Ride the Ridges Bicycle Tour, Winona Middle School, [www.ridetheridges.bike](http://www.ridetheridges.bike).

**Sept. 20**, 3rd Annual Glow Ball Tourney, The Arnold House East Side Farm, Galesville, [www.eastsidefarm.org](http://www.eastsidefarm.org).

**Sept. 20**, 21st Annual Main Event, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Old Main Cultural Center, Galesville, [www.oldmaingalesville.org](http://www.oldmaingalesville.org).

**Sept. 20-21**, La Crosse Hmong New Year Celebration, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Veterans Park, West Salem.

**Sept. 25-28**, Oktoberfest USA, Southside Oktoberfest Grounds, La Crosse, [www.oktoberfestusa.com](http://www.oktoberfestusa.com).

**Sept. 27**, Duane Betts and Palmetto Motel, 7 p.m., Historic Temple Theatre, Viroqua. [www.historictempletheatre.com](http://www.historictempletheatre.com).

## Live Summer Music Series

### SUNDAYS: (Aug. 3, 10, 24 & 31)

Concerts in the Park, 5-7 p.m., Halfway Creek Park, Holmen

### TUESDAYS: (August only)

Great River Sound, 6:30 p.m., Great River Landing, Onalaska

### WEDNESDAYS: (Aug. 6 & 13)

Music in the Valley, 5:30 p.m., Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center

### THURSDAYS: (through Sept. 11)

Moon Tunes, 5:30 p.m., Riverside Park

### SATURDAYS: (Aug. 2, 16 & 30)

Live in Viroqua, 6 p.m., Court Street





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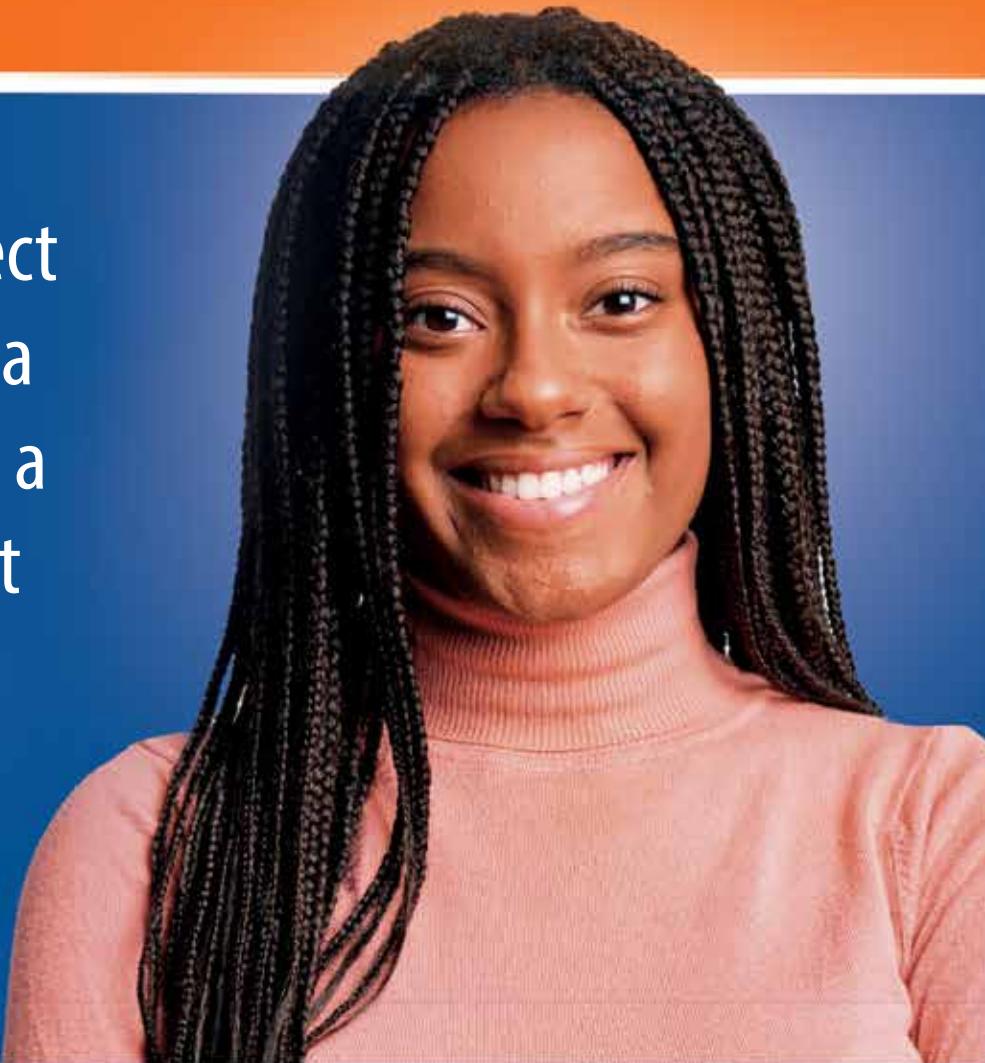


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