

Embrace Life Archives

The MU Workspace...So many ideas and opportunities....

Come to open times and/or get a group of friends and schedule a time to create (or just play) together! For more information, hours and options, check out [Workspace website here](#).

It's Like Riding a Bike

Fall is the perfect time to dust off your bike and find the nearest trail. Luckily, [Travel Iowa](#) has put together a list of biking trails, events, patios worth pedaling to, and so much more. One central Iowa option is [The High Trestle Trail](#). This trail runs for 25 miles through five towns in four counties and, because there are a variety of entry and access points, it is an ideal destination for cyclists of all interests and abilities.

Story County Conservation – many local outdoor exploring options!

Story County Conservation focus is “Connecting people with nature and improving natural resources -- making Story County a great place to live, work, and recreate.” They manage 3,500 acres of parks and natural areas, including lakes, campgrounds, and trails. They offer programs for Story County schools and the public that are informative and engaging. They are many volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups interested in making a difference in local natural resources. To learn more about Story County Conservation and their activities and resources, click [here](#).

The Harlem Renaissance shared in radio drama podcasts

Unheard, unseen voices of this pivotal moment in American history will be brought to life through half-hour radio dramas written by playwrights of color. This series is offered by The Classical Theatre of Harlem located at the epicenter of the only place in North America famous for creating renaissances. The Harlem Renaissance shaped our nation’s music, dance, literature, fashion, theatre, and political discourse. “Having these writers, who are living in the midst of a new Black art renaissance in theatre, film and television, revisit these less well-known figures are a testament to the contributions Black artists have made and how they have shaped our culture in the past, present, and future,” remarks Graham. To learn more and listen to the podcast, [go here](#).

Library exhibit recalls founding of Black Cultural Center

The Parks Library has an exhibit on the founding of the George A. Jackson Black Cultural Center in 1970 with all the material from the archival holdings of the library. The Black Cultural Center was named after Dr. Jackson who was the first director of what is now the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

The exhibit is split between the first and fourth floors of the library and accessible in a [digital version](#). The exhibit will be on display through the spring semester.

University Museums’ Exhibit: Vibrant Matter

Artist Julie W. Chang studio works is on exhibition in the [Christian Petersen Art Museum](#), layered patterns made from symbols of modern life appear in multiple series spanning the past ten years. The artist works in a variety of media, from acrylic chandelier forms, hanging scrolls, to colorfully patterned paintings. Her most recent *Amulet* series is featured in the exhibition, which explores the idea of protective objects and symbols, interwoven and layered to form an abstracted painting derived from the artist's understanding of cultural identity and creation of a symbolic protection. This exhibit will be on display until July 2022. For more on this exhibit [click here](#).

Adorable Panda Cubs Enjoy Snow

16 month old panda cub, Xiao Qi Ji enjoyed the year's first snow day at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, D.C. Check out the adorable footage [here](#)- it's sure to put a smile on your face!

University Museums' Monthly Art Walks: An Exploration of Materials in Public Art

This spring University Museums' staff and docents will host a series of art walks at 12:00 pm the last Wednesday of the month beginning with January 26. The theme is "An Exploration of Materials in Public Art" with each walk centered on a singular material that makes up a majority of the selected public art presented in the walk. The tours will discuss the artist, process, and innovation in materials. For more information, [click here](#).

COVID Recovery Iowa – Silver Linings

If you have parents, grandparents, and older neighbors – check out this resource from COVID Recovery Iowa. The Silver Linings program offers ways for older members of our community to be engaged and connect to other. Offerings include:

- Monday – Friday games, activities, and workshops over ZOOM. You can join by using information on the calendar shown above.
- Counselors are available to listen to and write a resident's life story as a Legacy, which can be shared with friends and family for generations to come.
- Friendly callers are available to contact residents for weekly Social Check-Ins.
- Weekly emails with upcoming events and a one-page newsletter with activity.

To get more information, contact Ash Roberts at ARoberts@HeartlandFamilyService.org

Brené Brown's Top 4 Life Lessons

As unique as we all are, an awful lot of us want the same things. We want to shake up our current less-than-fulfilling lives. We want to be happier, more loving, forgiving and connected with the people around us. So...we make decisions ("I'm going to hang out with happy people!") and we give ourselves lectures ("If you'd just stop feeling guilty, you'd able to do what you want).

Brené Brown, PhD, LMSW, author of *The Gifts of Imperfection* and research professor at the University of Houston, has spent the last 12 years figuring out what keeps us from the living—despite our best efforts—the kind of wholehearted, fully involved existences that we're trying to lead. It turns out that a lot of the assumptions we hold so dear, and we believe will turn around everything are...well...just plain wrong.

The Top 4 Life Lessons are:

1. **Fitting In Is *Not* Belonging**
2. **Guilt Is *Not* Bad for You**
3. **Perfectionism Is *Not* About Striving for Excellence**
4. **Vulnerability *Is* an Act of Courage**

Read the entire [story here](#). You can also find more information about Brené Brown and The Gifts of Imperfection [here](#)

It's A Wonderful Life The Radio Play

This beloved American holiday classic will captivate viewers as a live 1940s radio broadcast, performed by the Iowa Stage Theatre Company. An ensemble of five actors, plus one live sound effects artist, gives life to a few dozen characters on stage, sharing the story of idealistic George Bailey as he considers ending his life one fateful Christmas Eve.

Two options to enjoy this performance.

1. Attend a live performance Dec 16 – Dec 23. For ticket information, [click here](#).
2. Watch a recording on Iowa Public Television at 8:30 pm on Dec 17th or 9:30 pm on Dec. 25th. For more information, [click here](#)

14 Ways to See Iowa's Fall Colors

According to the DNR's website - Iowa offers some stunning views during the fall months along with various ways to experience them. Whether you're on a bike or hiking trail, on the water or in a car, these locations offer some of the best ways to view the scenery and make memories with your loved ones. Fall in Iowa is a great time to explore – check out the website [here](#).

Fishing Fun

Brooks Falls in Alaska's Katmai National Park is the best place in the world to watch brown bears feasting on salmon as they swim upstream to spawn. I was watching at 4pm Iowa time and there were TEN bears 'fishing' at that time. Amazing! [Check it out here](#).

EXPLORE is the largest live nature cam network on the planet. We bring nature to you, raw, unscripted, and unedited. Enjoy the natural world as it unfolds in real time in front of our cameras. EXPLORE.org takes you from Kenya, Africa to the riverbanks of Katmai, Alaska and everywhere in between. Visit the full multicam experience: <http://explore.org>

The Best of Iowa's State & County Parks

As part of your plans to enjoy some time outdoors and explore some of Iowa's best state and county park check this site out! Wanting a day trip or weekend getaway – Iowa has many options to explore. Whether you are looking for a great nature center, the states highest point, best fishing, best camping, best boating, or best beach – Travel Iowa has tons of information- including resources to build a trip on their website. Get more details at their [website here](#).

Zoom....With Goats!!!

Are you tired of Zoom Calls... one after another - same old thing. Then you need to check out this fun opportunity. For the small sum of \$7 (yes, 7 dollars) you can invite a goat to your next zoom call! You can even choose which goat you would like to have 'goat crash' your meeting all the way from the [Cronkshaw Fold Farm](#) in England. See the [news report](#) from CBS Sunday Morning and join the laughter.

The Met 360° Project

This award-winning series of [six short videos](#) invites viewers around the world to virtually visit The Met's art and architecture in a fresh, immersive way. Created using spherical 360° technology, it allows viewers to explore some of the Museum's iconic spaces as never before. Check out this amazing experience. Viewed more than 11 million times, this series affords an access and a perspective typically unavailable to the public. Viewers can experience the magic of standing in an empty gallery after-hours, witnessing a bustling space in time-lapse, or floating high above The Met Cloisters for a bird's-eye view. We strung cables, removed protective covers from works of art, and rigged cameras up high, all to allow viewers to explore The Met as never before.

You may view these videos on YouTube on multiple devices:

- On your smartphone: Move your phone up, down, and behind you to see all directions.
- On your desktop computer: Use the mouse to scroll in all directions. (*Note: For an optimal user experience, use Chrome or Firefox as your browser.*)
- On Google Cardboard or a VR headset

Be sure to turn up the volume to hear the music, too!

Decorah Eagles Live Camera- Spring has sprung!

Check out the [live North Decorah Bald Eagle Camera](#) and get lost watching the fuzzy baby bald eaglets!

Compelling Ground: Landscapes, Environments, and Peoples of Iowa

The Brunnier Art Museum at ISU has some amazing exhibits and online and virtual options as well as some limited in-person opportunities coming up. Twenty-five years ago the exhibition *Land of the Fragile Giants: Landscapes, Environments, and Peoples of the Loess Hills* opened at the Brunnier Art Museum. The exhibition invited artists to visit the Loess Hills in western Iowa and create art inspired by the unique geological region. Twenty-five years later, in honor of the original exhibition, but also as a moment to observe and examine the drastic changes that have taken place in the state of Iowa, University Museums presents the new exhibition – *Compelling Ground: Landscapes, Environments, and Peoples of Iowa*. To check out more about current and upcoming options, [go here](#).

National Zoo Panda Cam

The National Zoo in Washington D.C. has two Giant Pandas, plus a new cub. These live 'panda cams' keep an eye on what these amazing creatures are up to. With a recent snow end of January, there is some great video of the panda's enjoying the snow and sliding down hills, rolling over the grass, and simply enjoying

themselves. To watch the pandas playing in the snow, [follow this link](#). To find more information and the link to panda cam, [go here](#).

New York Philharmonic: Celebrating Sondheim

Currently on PBS, experience the December 31, 2019 of the The New York Philharmonic event that celebrates the dazzling orchestral world of Stephen Sondheim. The program is hosted by Bernadette Peters, with special guest vocalist Katrina Lenk (Tony Award™ winner for “The Band’s Visit”). Conducted by Alexander Gemignani, the concert will feature some of Sondheim’s most beloved works, including suites from "Sunday in the Park," "Into the Woods," "Sweeney Todd" and more.

You can see the entire performance on [PBS at this link](#). There is an 'advertisement' to start - stay with it - all 1 hour and 25 minutes are here for free to watch!

Explore the great [Iowa Outdoors](#) with PBS

The Iowa Outdoors show on PBS offers a glimpse into various options to get outside and enjoy all that Iowa has to offer.

This episode highlights:

- Flow Trails at Ewing Park in Des Moines on the south east side. Never heard of Flow Trails - it something new back in 2018 and looks fun and exciting. Called the roller coaster of biking or dirt surfing!
- What happened to all the waste from Cedar Rapids 2008 floods - an amazing lookout with views of town and surrounding areas.
- Lake Red Rocks lookout tower - amazing views with the history of the largest lake in Iowa.
- Getting youth outdoors! Would look different in these COVID days - but still getting youth outdoors is a great way to spend some time.

Check out this episode [here](#). More shows episodes of Iowa Outdoors can be found [here](#).

Amazing Video: Creating a virtual choir with 17,572 singers - *Sing Gently*

The coronavirus hasn't been kind to choirs. Think about it: You're packed in together, breathing deeply, mouths open wide. It's a recipe for super spreading. Choirs can't sing together over video chat, either; the Internet introduces about a half-second delay, making it impossible to sync up.

But in 2009, way before the pandemic, Grammy-winning composer Eric Whitacre figured out how to build a choir without having the singers in one place: "This idea came up which was pretty simple: I would upload a video of myself conducting the piece. And then people sat alone in their rooms and followed my conductor's track and sang along to it. If I uploaded all those videos and I started them at the same time, this choir would have to emerge, a virtual choir."

Watch the story from CBS Sunday Morning about the back ground [first here](#). Then sit back and watch the finished product, this this amazing experience, [you will find it here](#). And if you want to explore other virtual experiences check out Eric Whitacre [YouTube channel here](#).

EAP Interactive Experience

The Employee Assistance Program has created a fun activity for July. There is no better time to go on an adventure than the dog days of summer! This July explore the unknown, take the road less traveled, and follow the journey and excitement that life brings each day. Check out these 10 challenges and complete as many as you can!

Some of the challenges include:

- Map out your perfect summer
- Create a Top 10 list of places you'd like to visit
- Turn off GPS and use a paper map

Download the map of experiences [here](#). Share it with family and friends and plan a socially distance gathering for the end of July to compare ideas and experiences!

Paul McCartney Carpool Karaoke with James Corden

James Corden heads to Liverpool for a special day with Paul McCartney spent exploring the city of Paul's youth, visiting his childhood home where he wrote music with John Lennon, performing songs in a local pub and of course driving around singing a few of Paul's biggest hits. This is a fun to watch if you are a Paul McCartney and Beatles fan... [Watch it here](#).

The Power of Chair Yoga

Chair yoga is for everyone. This article shares some chair yoga poses that will help you cultivate strength, flexibility, and body-centered restful awareness. Using a chair as a prop for yoga can be an expression of creativity as well as a useful, supportive, and empowering tool that can be practiced anywhere!

Whether you will be practicing one pose or several, set the stage for a yoga experience just as you would if you were practicing with a yoga mat. Create a sacred space in which you can relax, ideally where you will not be disturbed, and set up your chair. Put the chair on a non-slick surface, such as a yoga mat. Place yoga blocks nearby so they can be put under your feet. Pad your chair seat and back with comfortable blankets. Put on some mellow music. Wear comfortable clothing in which you can stretch and stay warm. Go to the article [The Power of Chair Yoga](#) by Lena Schmidt, Certified Yoga Instructor. In this article, you will find several examples of chair yoga postures. These poses can be practiced individually on their own or as a flowing sequence.

The Powerful Health Benefits of Spending Time Outside

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average American spends 93% of their life indoors. 87% of that time is spent inside, while the other 6% is spent in automobiles. This means that only 7% of the average American's life is spent outdoors. This is unfortunate considering that spending time outdoors is one of the easiest ways to improve your overall health and wellbeing.

Research suggests that spending time outside can function as a natural medicine. It can help improve your physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Spending more time outdoors is also linked to a lower risk of

early death. Besides helping you live a longer, healthier life, spending time in nature can help you live a happier life, too.

We know that being a full-time employee can make it difficult to spend time outdoors. But even a few five-minute outdoor breaks a day can have a positive impact on your health. [Keep reading to learn about some of the amazing health benefits of spending time outdoors.](#) Plus, author Robyn Whalen includes a few tips to help you get outside more often!

Live virtual interactive tour of Faroe Islands

What a fun experience! This small country was hit hard with no visitors - so they created a new remote tourism tool, the first of its kind. Via a mobile, tablet or PC, you can explore the Faroes' rugged mountains, see close-up its cascading waterfalls and spot the traditional grass-roofed houses by interacting – live – with a local Faroese, who will act as your eyes and body on a virtual exploratory tour. The local is equipped with a live video camera, allowing you to not only see views from an on-the-spot perspective, but also to control where and how they explore using a joystick to turn, walk, run or even jump! [Check out this video to learn more](#) The live events are over for now, but you can check out the recordings on the site.

Never heard of this place - check out the [website of Faroe Islands](#). Some quick facts, made up of 18 islands located Iceland and Scotland in the North Atlantic Ocean. First settled in 300 AD and since 1948, the Faroe Islands have been a self-governing nation under the external sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark with about 50,000 people calling these islands home.

Sparking Joy: A Mindfulness Practice for Everyday

Joy is a capacity we all have that can be trained and developed—It is a primary component of psychological well-being, encompassing moments of appreciation, enduring contentment, and a sense of confidence and gratitude. In an story [Sparking Joy: A Mindfulness Practice for Everyday](#), Willem Kuyken suggest one mindfulness exercise that everyone can do is **Appreciative Joy**.

For this practice, bring your whole heart to the moment. Joy has its roots in a wholehearted appreciative attention. As you go about your day, bring your attention to seeing, touching, and listening wholeheartedly—mindful of how you are touching and being touched by the world. Take moments to pause—to feel the touch of the breeze on your skin, to hear the laughter of a child on the playground, to fully taste the food you eat. Reflect on all that goes well for you today—your ability to move through the world, to be fed and warm, and to care for yourself. See not only the trees but also the space around the trees, not only the stars but also the vastness of the sky that holds the stars. Sense the small moments of generosity you extend to or receive from others—the smile, the door held open. In every moment, sense what it is that holds the potential to gladden your heart when you are truly present.

Try this practice and then share with family and friends. Some this simply can be powerful and help you navigate what can be challenging times.

Explore your creative side

With more time at home, take some time to explore your creative side. Whether you want to explore food, gardening, art or physical fitness - check out options online and give it a try!

Here are some video ideas to check out:

[America's Test Kitchen \(videos\)](#) - create a recipe exchange with friends.

[Better Homes and Garden - Garden Design ideas \(videos\)](#) - plan how to update an aspect of your outdoor space.

[Michaels art projects \(videos\)](#) - share an idea and then compare the amazing art that you create.

[ISU Recreation Services Virtual Fitness options \(videos and live stream\)](#) - tell a friend and attend the class - then have a virtual smoothie break after!

Send us feedback and/or ideas to [ISU WellBeing](#). Thanks!

Free sketchbook drawing lesson

Earth Day is April 22 and with all going on, it has a special meaning this year. As part of the @sierraclub's community program and virtual Earth Month celebration - enjoy [this free drawing lesson](#). Artist Jessie Rasche invites you to bring your sketchbook or a couple pieces of paper and a pencil and learn some new skills! New sessions are every Thursday at noon (Central Time) to advance your skills. Topics will include field / outdoor sketching, using different materials such as pens, charcoal and watercolor. You'll learn about the world and about yourself!

***Alike* short animated film by Daniel Martinez Lara and Rafa Cano Mendez - VIDEO**

Often, we get so mired down with the day to day 'must dos' that we forget to enjoy some of the 'get tos'. This short film (less than 10 minutes) is a delight with important reminders of how to embrace life. Watch this short film [Alike here](#). Then think of those people in your life and identify one thing that you can do to simply bring you, and them, a smile.

Reflection

One way to Embrace Life is to pause and reflect on how things are going for you in this changing environment. Take a few minutes and identify an action that you can start doing today.

What simple things bring you joy?

What is a first step in working on a project on the 'to do' list.

How can I be of service to a neighbor? (while maintaining social distancing)

Infuse What Brings You Joy

Spend five minutes and make a list of all the things that bring you joy. What makes you smile? Is it music? Art? Wild places? Plants? Animals? Now pick five things on your list. Make a plan with action steps on how you are going to infuse it in the next two days. Here are some examples to get you thinking:

Get up to watch the sun rise

Bring a favorite picture or plant into your home office space

Playing music on Pandora on your computer

Watching silly videos that make you "belly laugh"

Then share what brings you joy with family, friends, or colleagues. Reach out to at least three people and encourage them to join you in this activity.