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NEIGHBORS *of* CHASKA

NOVEMBER 2024



SYN ROBERTSON
Revitalizing Veterans Dreams
A nonprofit serving local veterans

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Dear Chaska Neighbors,

Thankfulness and Gratitude

As we welcome November and the cooler days ahead, we're reminded of the importance of community and the people who make it strong. This month, I want to take time to honor our veterans—those men and women who have bravely served our country and sacrificed to protect the freedoms we enjoy every day. I'm so thankful for Syn Robertson, on our cover, for her personal dedication to our veterans in crisis and for helping young, underprivileged adults and teens prepare for a successful career in the military.

Chaska has always been a place where community values thrive, and our veterans embody those values of courage, service, and commitment. Whether they're sharing stories at local events, participating in community projects, or quietly offering their support to neighbors, their presence enriches our lives in countless ways. As we gather with family and friends, let's take a moment to reflect on the freedoms we often take for granted and the individuals who made it possible.

November is a month of gratitude, and we are so fortunate to live in a place where relationships and service to others matter. As we prepare for Thanksgiving, let's not forget to express our thanks to the veterans and their families who call Chaska home. Your service is the heart of our community. In addition, I want to express a warm thank you to our sponsors and community members who have served our country.

With warm regards,

Cindy Jamison

Neighbors of Chaska



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SYN ROBERTSON

A LEGACY OF RESILIENCE AND SERVICE

By Jeff Angell | Photos by Danielle Swanson, Danielle Swanson Photography

A Business Built on Dedication and Trust

At 53 years old, Syn Robertson has cultivated a life full of purpose, passion, and community. As a small business owner, fitness coach, and nonprofit founder, Syn's work has touched many lives. Through her endeavors, she has provided professional services, fitness opportunities, and built strong connections within her local community in Chaska.

"I've been self-employed for 30 years with Side Kick Cleaning," Syn proudly states. After all these years, she still maintains some of the same clients from her early days in business. "I still have clients from when I first started the company, a fact that I am very proud of." This longevity highlights her dedication and the trust she has built with her clients.

L.B. Athletes: Fitness for All Bodies

Beyond her business, Syn has a deep love for fitness and helping others find joy in moving their bodies. She is the coach of a specialized class called L.B. Athletes (Large-Body Athletes),

a space where everyone, regardless of size, feels comfortable and safe focusing on functional movement.

"The class is designed to be size-friendly and beginner-oriented, focusing on building functional movement and meeting each individual where they are at," Syn explains. Her philosophy is rooted in making fitness accessible for all. "I believe everybody deserves a safe space to feel comfortable moving their bodies, and mastering the basics including boosting endurance, increasing agility, gaining strength, and improving cardiovascular health." For Syn, every participant in her class is an athlete.

Revitalizing Veterans' Dreams (ReVD)

Syn's dedication to community well-being took on new meaning with the founding of Revitalizing Veteran's Dreams (ReVD). This nonprofit is committed to reducing veteran suicide and fostering connections among veterans. "Both L.B. Athletes and Revitalizing Veteran's Dreams were created after a personal experience with a suicide on March 5, 2023, it hit close to my

life and made it clear that my community, my peeps, are not okay," Syn shares, reflecting on the event that inspired her to take action. It's a reminder that veterans, friends, or family: check on your peeps. They are not OK!

ReVD offers fitness programs and social events, creating shared experiences for veterans and preparing young people for military service. "Our mission is to strengthen both, promoting mental wellness, resilience, and the discipline necessary for success," Syn explains. By building bridges between future service members and veterans, ReVD creates a supportive network. "We believe that by building this network, we create a positive impact on the military community that ripples into every part of life."

Though Syn is not a veteran herself, her connection to the military stems from her brother. "My connection to the military is through my youngest sibling," she says. "His first tour to Iraq began shortly after boot camp. This close connection has driven me to focus on supporting veterans in ways that can revitalize their sense of purpose and hope."

Finding Home in Chaska

Outside of her professional and nonprofit work, Syn is also a mother, raising a boy she affectionately nicknamed Spiffie. "Having a house full of boys, you'll understand when I say, 'You can't make up boy stories,'" she jokes. Her family life is filled with joy, laughter, and memorable moments shared over family meals with her son and his friends.

A proud native of the South Side of Minneapolis, Syn's journey to Chaska was unexpected. In 2020, her significant other, William, originally from Jacksonville, Florida, suggested they relocate. "When he suggested we relocate to Chaska, my reply was, 'Why



do I have to move out so far?'" she recalls with a smile. However, she quickly fell in love with the small-town charm. "On Mother's Day 2020, we spent the day in Chaska. I fell in love instantly. The small-town vibe and energy had me hooked."

Syn now enjoys the outdoor activities her new home offers. One of her favorite pastimes is walking to the Chaska Cubbies baseball games during the summer. "It makes for a perfect summer night with a very talented baseball team," she says. Living in a house overlooking the bluffs of Shakopee, Syn feels a strong connection to her family roots. "Right across the street from our house is a trail. I think it used to be an old railroad line (my grandpa worked for the SOO). We ruck and bike ride on this trail. I feel very connected to my grandpa here (a Purple Heart recipient from WWII)."

A Legacy of Resilience and Service

Syn Robertson's story is one of resilience, community, and dedication to making a difference in the lives of others. Through her business, fitness coaching, and nonprofit work, she continues to inspire and uplift those around her, embodying the spirit of Chaska's close-knit and supportive community.

Join Syn for Burger Night at the Chaska VFW on November 20th from 5:00-7:30 PM, where Revitalizing Veterans' Dreams will be cooking burgers for just \$4. "It's a great, informal night to meet us and support our cause," Syn states. Visit revitalizingveteransdreams.org for more details!





WHY HAVE MY HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE PREMIUMS INCREASED?

By Dave Roy, owner of JL Insurance Agency - Allstate Insurance

Over the past few years, insurance agents have fielded questions from policyholders about insurance rate increases for both home and auto policies. Auto rates have flattened while homeowner's insurance rates rise, especially here in Minnesota. Why is this happening?

We have seen more natural disasters than ever before, which comes at a higher cost in Minnesota. The chart below shows what Minnesota has experienced in recent years. An increase in labor and material costs, combined with an upsurge in severe storm events, has caused insurers to either end coverage in the state or raise rates.



What can a homeowner do to mitigate this? First, ensure you have the right amount of dwelling coverage for your home. We see cases daily where the value of the home and the cost to rebuild it have outstripped the dwelling coverage. Also, consider checking with other insurance agencies. Many insurers have reduced their costs by changing wind and hail deductibles to a percentage of the house's value. What was once a \$1000 deductible is now, at 1%, a \$4-\$6k deductible or more. Others have put policy provisions in place to pay depreciated roof value for older roofs. You just have to compare and balance the risk with the right coverage you are comfortable with. By taking these proactive steps, you can regain control over your insurance costs and ensure you have the right coverage for your needs.



Reach out to our office in Chanhassen at 952-448-3555 or www.allstate.com/daveroy for a thorough review of your policies. It's crucial to keep your policies up to date as things change rapidly like the weather in the insurance market. By staying informed and making the necessary adjustments, you can ensure your home is always well-protected.

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THANKFUL FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD SHELVES HELPING PROVIDE FOOD ITEMS FOR THOSE IN NEED

By Patti Sinykin, Executive Director of Bountiful Basket Food Shelf

There are between 600 and 800 local Carver County families who will find it difficult to serve a traditional Thanksgiving meal. To support these families, Bountiful Basket Food Shelf, Love Inc., Mi CASA, St. Joseph Church in Waconia, and St. Victoria Church in Victoria are once again working together to spread holiday joy.

"The need for food assistance at Bountiful Basket continues to rise steadily," says Patti Sinykin, Executive Director of Bountiful Basket. "While the holiday season can bring extra challenges for many families, we're focused on meeting the increased demand and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a special Thanksgiving meal together with their loved ones."

The five organizations collaborate to gather all the necessary funds and ingredients and coordinate distribution. Love Inc. volunteers will deliver meals to some families. Others can receive them through their regular shopping visit at Bountiful Basket or during a special pick-up event staffed by Bountiful Basket and Mi CASA volunteers. With multiple options available, everyone in need should have access to a festive Thanksgiving meal.



To learn more and/or make a gift to this program, visit www.bountifulbasketfoodshelf.org or if you have questions, contact either patti@bountifulbasketfoodshelf.org or kathleen@loveinccc.com.



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Formacoat also houses the art gallery of Sara Lee Hanlon and is available for viewing by appointment at ce-h.us/sarahanlon/



SOTA ELECTRIC: HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP

By Cindy Jamison

Sota Electric, owned by Sean Koehn, is a highly reliable and customer-focused electrical contractor serving residential, commercial, and industrial clients. Their attention to detail, strong communication, and commitment to problem-solving make them stand out. Safety is one of their highest priorities and Sota Electric will take the time to troubleshoot your problem and make sure it's fixed correctly the first time. With over 34 years of combined experience, their team offers a full range of services, from swapping out receptacles to complex industrial machine wiring.

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If you own or operate a commercial kitchen, restaurant, office building or any local business, Sota Electric has all the knowledge and expertise to meet your commercial needs which includes exceptional customer service and support 24/7. Inside or outside, they can maintain every aspect of your commercial space in order to keep your business running smoothly.



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You can count on Sota Electric to keep your manufacturing facility, warehouse or machine shop operational at all times. Sean's team will efficiently plan, coordinate and schedule the work, to get the job done quickly, and in a seamless manner, so you can focus on your production.

GO HAWKS!

Sean and his wife grew up in Chaska and are dedicated to the local community. They heavily support local businesses and the relationships they have built in the Chaska area. Left guard at the time, Sean fondly remembers the time his Chaska football team beat EP in double overtime!! They still live in the SW Metro with their 3 children

“Sean was able to stop by my house on short notice, and was incredibly professional, approachable and friendly. He puts an emphasis on doing things the right way the first time, and I was very impressed with the attention to detail. If you're looking for a reliable electrician, I would highly recommend Sota Electric. We will be using them again in the future. Thanks again!”

~ Vince W

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SPOTLIGHT ON CCFA

By Gretchen Mellies

Chaska-Chanhassen Football Association (CCFA) is a volunteer-run, community-based youth football organization engaging 700+ players in the Eastern Carver County School (ECCS) District and surrounding areas. CCFA offers flag football programs in both the Spring and Fall for boys and girls Pre-K through 8th grade, with a focus on football fundamentals, teamwork, and having fun!

For a more competitive football experience, CCFA offers tackle football opportunities for players 3rd grade through 8th grade, feeding into the local Chaska and Chanhassen high school football programs.

Fall 2024 flag and tackle football seasons wrapped up in mid-October and CCFA is gearing up for Spring flag football, which kicks off in April. Registration opens in December via Chaska Parks and Recreation (chaskamn.gov) or ECCS District 112 (ce4all.org).

Stay up to date on all things CCFA Flag Football when you Like or Follow the CCFA Flag Football Facebook page. If you want to learn more about CCFA football, please visit ccfafootball.com or contact ccfa.flagfootball@gmail.com.



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MEET DR. DARABI

“TOP DOCTOR FOR DERMATOLOGY IN 2024”

BY MINNESOTA MONTHLY MAGAZINE *By Cindy Jamison*

We are so fortunate to have Dr. Darabi as our new Expert Skin Care Contributor! After working in an employed position for 9 years, Dr. Darabi pursued his dream and opened Darabi Dermatology, a Dermatology and Mohs skin cancer surgery clinic in 2021. Dr. Darabi is one of a handful of dermatologists in the nation to be triple board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology in Dermatology, Mohs skin cancer surgery, and Dermatopathology.

He has been voted best Dermatologist in Carver county in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, Rising Star Dermatologist in 2019 by Mpls St. Paul Magazine, and Top Doctor for Dermatology in 2024 by Minnesota Monthly Magazine. Dr. Darabi is adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota, Department of Dermatology, where he teaches Dermatology residents. He also holds a doctorate degree in Immunology and has published extensively in peer reviewed journals.

Nurse Practitioner Kendyl Zeidler joined the Darabi Dermatology team after gaining years of experience as a Registered Nurse in Cardiology at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, obtaining her Nurse Practitioner degree at Saint Catherine’s University, and working as a Cardiology Nurse Practitioner at Minneapolis Heart Institute. She completed a rigorous Dermatology training program and offers general Dermatology services including complete skin exams for skin cancer detection and prevention, biopsies and removals of skin growths, medical management of acne, rashes and skin infections. She is also adept at cosmetic Dermatology services such as Botox, IPL for brown and red spots, and skin care products.

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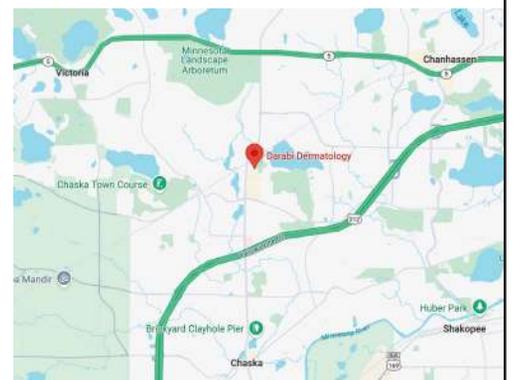
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WILL YOU LIVE TO BE 100?

By Connie Jacobs

Have you been to the Chaska History Center’s exhibit, Will You Live To Be 100? It’s a great deal of fun and very informative for all ages. The exhibit is about how medicine has evolved since the 1850’s through modern times. There are stories about the medical providers in Chaska including midwives and pharmacies.

There are not only artifacts to look at but games to play as well. If you like a good scavenger hunt come on in and win a small prize when completed! Do you get headaches? Play Plinko and find out how your headache may have been treated. Draw a card out of a basket with your “year of birth on it” and spin the wheel to find out which disease you may have contracted and whether you will survive.

Ever get tired or feel down? Come learn a little bit of the history of 7Up, Coca-Cola and Dr. Pepper and how these popular drinks played into medicine. Did you know snake oil was once a real remedy for muscle aches and pains? And of course, you can learn about remedies for “women’s ailments”, most of which contained alcohol.



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Do you go to the dentist on a regular basis? Find out what tools the dentists used in times past. Let's be thankful for modern dentistry.

This exhibit is fun for the whole family and a great way to pass some time over the holidays or on weekends. The Chaska History Center is open from 1:00 pm -4:00pm Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The Chaska History Center's new exhibit "Technology and Cultural Changes for Women" Will open in April. Our genealogy classes begin in January. Please check the Chaska History Center's Facebook page or website for details and registration information at www.chaskahistory.org.



MEET MEMPHIS BORN TO SERVE OTHERS

By Cindy Jamison

Memphis is the perfect example of work-life balance. His full-time job is helping his human mom, Katie, manage her Type 1 Diabetes, but he also clocks in at his mom's business, helping ease the anxiety of clients who are nervous about getting their makeup done! When he's not working, he enjoys spending time with his 3 human siblings, Charlie (11), Evelyn (12), and Molly (13), and his human dad, Patrick. Some of his favorite pastimes include hiding his mom's shoes and keys so she can't leave for work, saying hello to friends who walk by the house, and supporting local businesses (those with pup cups, at least!). Memphis is a highly skilled service animal trained to open the front door, refrigerator, or cupboard doors. He has been known to bring home other furry neighborhood friends, primarily other dogs, but once brought a possum friend into the house to show Mom! That friend was not invited back!

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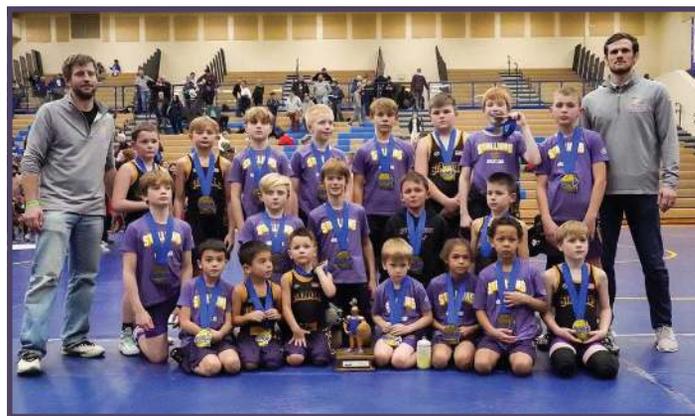
By Lucas Tollefson

The Chaska-Chanhassen Stallions Wrestling Club is a thriving community-based organization dedicated to fostering the sport of wrestling among youth in the surrounding communities of the Carver, Victoria, Chaska and Chanhassen area. The club has a rich history of developing talented wrestlers who have gone on to compete at the highest levels of the sport.

Under the guidance of experienced coaches, the Stallions provide a supportive and inclusive environment for boys and girls of grades Pre-K to 6th grade for all skill levels. The club's training programs focus on developing fundamental wrestling techniques, building strength and conditioning, and instilling the values of discipline, hard work, and good sportsmanship.

The Stallions participate in various local and regional tournaments throughout the year, giving wrestlers the opportunity to compete against other talented athletes and gain valuable experience. The club also emphasizes the importance of academic achievement and community involvement, encouraging its members to excel both on and off the mat.

The Stallions Wrestling Club is more than just a sports organization; it's a family that brings together athletes, coaches, and parents who share a passion for wrestling and a commitment to developing well-rounded individuals. To learn more, check out stallionswrestling.org.



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JUST TRUFFLES AN AMERICAN DREAM

By Sisters - Sarah Knutson and Leslie Mattson

We are two sisters who left corporate America to find a more simple way of life and spend more time with our families.

A little over a year ago, we happened upon a very special opportunity to buy an established chocolate shop, called Just Truffles. The previous owner started the business in 1988 in her home kitchen, and eventually had a popular storefront on Grande Ave in St. Paul. When Covid shut down many businesses, she closed her shop and switched exclusively to online sales and eventually sought retirement.

Fast forward a few years and here we are working hard to build the business back up to its original glory. While searching for the perfect brick and mortar location in the area, we bought a food truck and it has become an amazing and fun adventure! We enjoy meeting new people, making friends with the other food trucks, and most importantly the look on customer's faces when they try our truffles for the first time!

Every batch of truffles takes 3 days to make. We hand roll and hand dip each truffle in the highest quality chocolate. The center is a mouth watering creamy ganache leaving you craving more. The outer shell is dipped in either dark, milk or white chocolate.



We do food truck events at local wineries and breweries. We even made a signature truffle for one of the local wineries that they sell in their gift shop and use for wine tastings.

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A HAUNTINGLY GOOD TIME IN DOWNTOWN CHASKA!

By Lynn Laumann

I have been in business in Chaska for eight years now and I love the old historic brick buildings as a backdrop for some of my photo sessions. I get so many clients comment on how charming Downtown Chaska is! So when I heard that the Chaska Historical Society was having a walking tour of downtown with lanterns and ghost stories, I was like, “you had me at lanterns!”

This past October I showed up at the Chaska History Center building for some sightings and scary stories. We gathered outside and started our walk west to a residential area and stopped in front of many random old homes.

We heard about Chaska brick and architects as well as the original owners and the families that lived here. So many interesting facts and tales that brought to mind horse and buggies and days gone by. *Speaking of horse and buggy, did you know that a commercial building in Chaska is haunted by two horses? You would have to take the tour to find out where and what happened!*

Stories of mysterious things that can't be explained that have been passed on for years were collected by the volunteers and shared to us as we walked the sidewalks of downtown

and it got darker and darker as the sun set. Time to turn on the lanterns and keep on walking to the next building for the next tale. Someone in the group gasps in disbelief! Is that something in that upstairs window? Maybe!

If any of this sounds like a fun evening be sure to sign up for it next year in October with the Chaska Historical Society!
<https://www.chaskahistory.org>

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Upcoming Events

Sat., Nov. 9

FAMILY BINGO!

@Chaska American Legion Post 57
Are you looking for a fun afternoon event for the whole family? Starting at 12:30 PM, the Chaska American Legion Auxiliary Unit 57 will be hosting a FREE Family Bingo event. Play for FREE for a chance to win great prizes. In addition to playing bingo, every kid will have the opportunity to make a Veteran's Day card to give a veteran. The kitchen will be open to purchase lunch.
Time: 12:30 PM
Cost: Free
facebook.com/share/qaUEnVKoHAvKusYt/

Sat.-Sun., Nov 9-10

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Sat., Nov 9

Deer Weekend

@Downtown Chaska
Head downtown for a community event (sip and shop) and plenty of deals and fun at the businesses.
Time: Varies
Cost: none
downtownchaska.com

Tues., Nov. 12

Trivia Night

@Chaska Library
Age 10-18. Registration required. Trivia Night is back! Gather your friends and assemble your best trivia team. Directions for creating a group will be emailed by staff prior to the event. Any youth without a team will be placed onto a team. All users will receive a special Trivia Night Button and special prizes will be awarded for each category.
Time: 5-6pm
Cost: Free
carverlib.libcal.com/event/12715924

Thurs., Nov. 21

Winter Lights

@Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
Stroll through the Arboretum's gardens decked out with light displays highlighting flowers, trees, and the beauty of nature on a one-mile, self-guided walk. Visit through Jan. 5, 2025.
Time: Varies
Cost: Varies
arb.umn.edu/winterlights

Sat., Nov. 23

Objects of the Fur Trade

@Lowry Nature Center
Explore the history of Minnesota's fur trade during this free drop-in program. Get your hands on some fur trade objects including, pelts, beads and other trade goods you might find in an 1840s

fur trade post. These trading posts were places of cultural exchange where Native people traded pelts and other goods for blankets, beads, metal tools and other supplies from European markets.
Drop in anytime.
Time: 1-4pm
Cost: None
threeriversparks.org/page/three-rivers-programs

Wed., Nov. 27

Thanksgiving Eve

@Grace Church
Celebrate Thanksgiving at Grace Church Chaska! Join us for an evening filled with gratitude, worship, and community.
grace.church/thanksgiving

Sat., Nov. 30

Small Business Saturday

@Downtown Chaska
Come for the great deals, support our local businesses, and stay for the fantastic food and drinks!
Time: All day
Cost: Varies
downtownchaska.com

Sun., Dec. 1

Natural Wreath Making

@Gale Woods Farm
Create a beautiful wreath by using natural materials collected at the farm. All equipment will be provided.
Time: 12:30-3pm
Cost: \$35
threeriversparks.org/page/three-rivers-programs

Sat., Dec. 7

Hometown Holiday

@Downtown Chaska
Don't miss out on the carriage rides, Santa, llamas, music, s'mores, fire pits to stay toasty warm and all the great deals at the small businesses!
Time: 2-5pm
Cost: Free
downtownchaska.com

Sun., Dec. 8

Firemen's Park Tree Lighting

@Firemen's Park
Come light the tree, visit Santa and enjoy s'mores. Plus you'll see some new lights at the park courtesy of the Chaska 100 Club
Time: 6:00-7:30pm
Cost: Free
chaskamn.gov/649/Community-Events

ONGOING

Monday

Newcomers Club of the SW Suburbs

@Ginna's Café in Scheels at the Eden Prairie Mall
Newcomers are a great way to meet new friends, get acquainted with the community, and enjoy many activities and special interest groups each week.
Time: 10:30am
grace.church

Saturdays

Courthouse Lake Parkrun

@Downtown Chaska
Meet at the Beech St & E 2nd Street trailhead for a beautiful, fun, free, timed 5k. All levels are welcome, so come run, walk, jog, and have some fun!
Time: 9am
Cost: Free
facebook.com/9everyaturday

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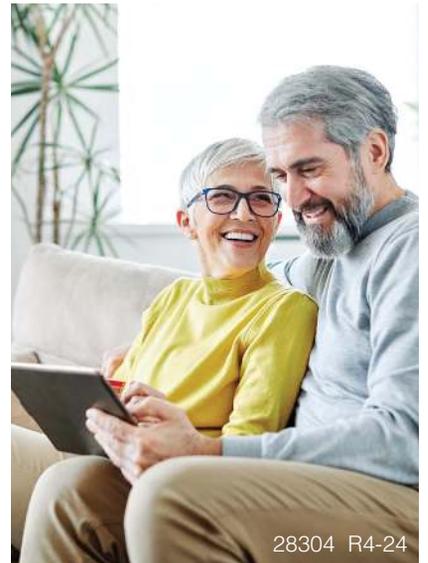
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