

September 2025

# InSpire

Magazine



**Defying Gravity,  
One Flip at a Time!**

**Harvest Time at  
Alsum Farms & Produce**



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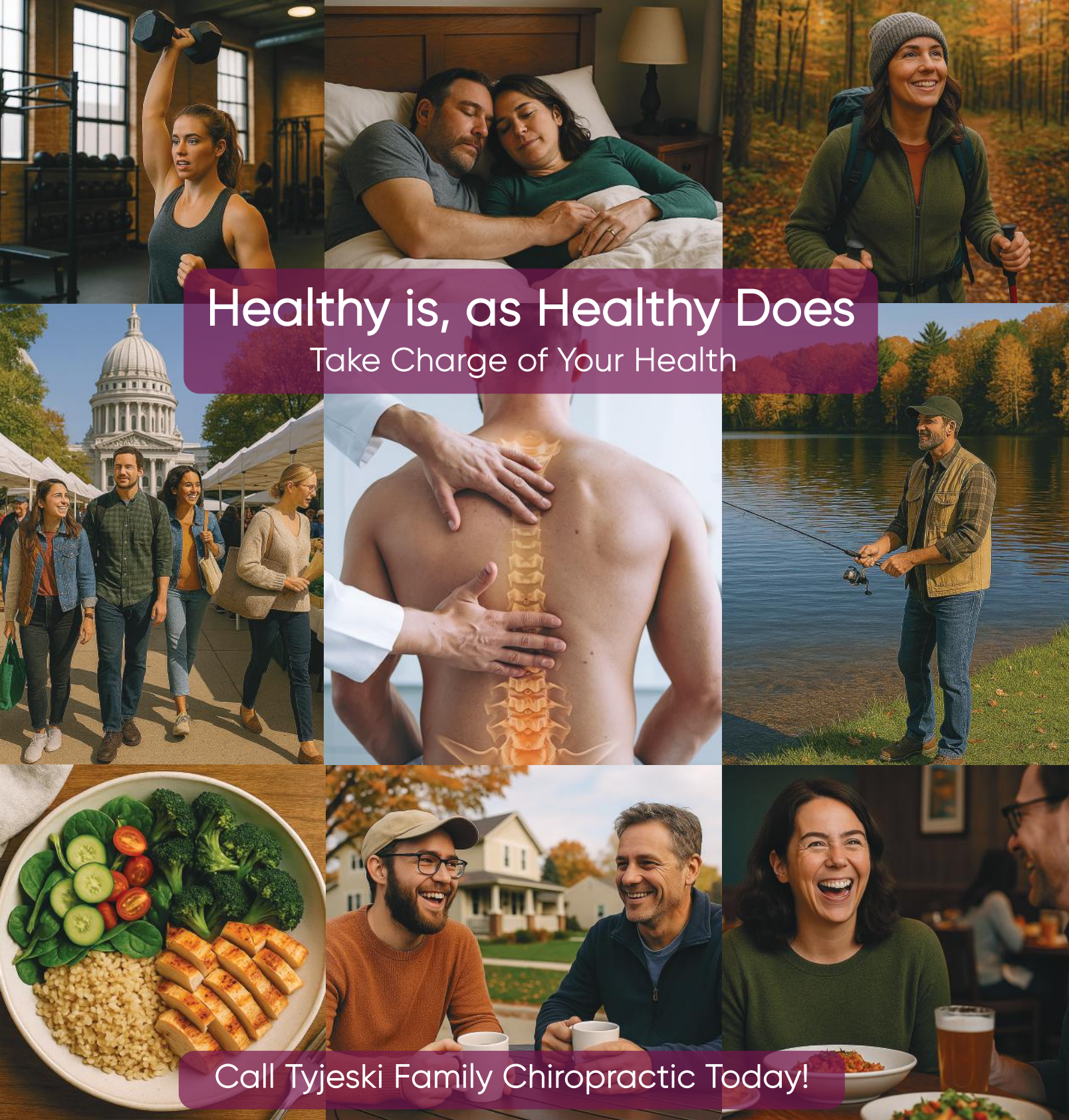
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Aimslee Stevens, of Juneau, demonstrates an advanced pose on the balance beam.



## Exciting News!

InSpire Magazine is now accessible online at our brand new website [www.inspiremagazinewi.com](http://www.inspiremagazinewi.com) alongside our traditional print edition!

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"How can we expect our children to know and experience the joy of giving unless we teach them that the greater pleasure in life lies in the art of giving rather than receiving." - **James Cash Penney**

Beyond a simple donation of time, volunteering offers a wealth of enriching rewards. This month's magazine explores the powerful truth, inspiring readers to discover the profound benefits of giving back.

Below are several reasons to volunteer:

- Focusing on others instead of ourselves.
- You find fulfillment in helping reach a common goal and improving the lives of others.
- Helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety.
- Combats depression
- Makes you happy
- Increases self-confidence
- Provides a sense of purpose
- Connects you to others
- Brings fun and fulfillment to your life

Join a cause you are passionate about and volunteer a few hours. Together, we can create positive change in our communities and enrich the lives of many, including your own.

Sincerely,

*Denise Fitzsimmons*

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Pictured: (l to r) Arianna Zomer, Kaitlyn Behm, Adeline Ziaja, Julia Van Riper, Dawson Randell.



## Defying Gravity, One Flip at a Time!

Did you know gymnastics can strengthen not only the body but also the mind, emotions, and social skills? Marie Cigelske, owner and instructor at Get Fit Health Club – Tumble Tyme, has seen these benefits firsthand. Inspired by her studies in physical fitness and the lasting effects of movement on active individuals, she launched her fitness and gymnastics business in 1988. Today, she coaches nearly 200 students each year.

### Why is gymnastics so good for kids?

“Gymnastics doesn’t just build strength,” says Marie. “It develops coordination, balance, agility, flexibility, and endurance. Plus, it’s fun—and that fun gives kids the self-confidence they need in so many other areas of life.”

### How does gymnastics influence life beyond the gym?

“Our emphasis on detail and focus translates directly into improved concentration in school and academics,” Marie explains. “Working as a team sharpens social skills and creates positive outcomes, both individually and within groups.”

### What’s the best age to start?

“Four or five is ideal, but it’s never too late,” she says. “Some kids don’t discover an interest until eight or nine—and that’s perfectly fine, too.”

### What’s the most challenging part of coaching?

“Every student has unique skills and goals. Coaching means constantly tracking where each gymnast is and guiding them through the next step. It’s demanding—but incredibly rewarding.”

### Rising Star: Aimslee Stevens

This month’s cover features Aimslee Stevens of Juneau, who has been tumbling, bouncing, and flipping since the age of three. Now eight, she’s spent five years growing in the sport she loves.

Drawn in by her natural energy and curiosity, Aimslee has found joy in both her team camaraderie and her personal achievements. Her hard work has already earned her first-place ribbons on the bars and vault. Even more impressive, her dedication to practice has taught her perseverance—a skill that reaches far beyond the gymnastics floor.

From strength and flexibility to confidence and resilience, gymnastics truly helps kids defy gravity—in more ways than one.



### Benefits of Gymnastics

- Physical Benefits
- Strength and flexibility
- Balance and coordination
- Bone density
- Cardiovascular health

### Mental & Emotional Benefits

- Discipline and focus
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Stress reduction

### Social Benefits

- Teamwork and communication
- Leadership and life skills
- Problem-solving



Above: Aimslee Stevens on the Uneven Parallel Bars.  
Inset: Marie Cigelske, below: Harper Gilmer strikes a pose on the balance beam.







# Your Immune System: The Guardian of YOUR Galaxy

By Dr. Stephanie Tyjeski

In the vast universe of your body, where trillions of cells carry out life-sustaining missions every second, one force stands vigilant against threats both foreign and domestic: your immune system. Much like the heroes in a cosmic blockbuster, this intricate defense network patrols your internal galaxy, identifying invaders, eliminating dangers, and maintaining peace across your biological universe. But unlike the silver-screen superheroes, your immune system works around the clock, often without thanks or recognition. In this article, we'll explore how this complex system functions, what happens when it falters, and how you can strengthen it to ensure your galaxy stays safe, balanced, and thriving. Buckle up—your immune system's story is one worth telling.

## Meet the Guardians

Your immune system is basically an elite team of microscopic superheroes, set on keeping the bad guys out. It includes white blood cells (the OG defenders), antibodies (your body's custom-made snipers), the spleen (a glorified lymph node with Superpowers), and even bone marrow (yes, your bones are secretly cooking up immune cells for the fight).

## Fact (You Didn't Know) #1: Your Gut is the Command Center

Roughly 70% of your immune system lives in your gut. That's right—your intestines are more than just a spaghetti tunnel. They're home to trillions of bacteria, some of which are warriors defending against invaders. If you have symptoms such as acid reflux, constipation, or loose stools, it is a sign your gut is struggling to function. If your gut is struggling, so is your immune system. So the next time someone says, "Trust your gut," take it literally.

Keeping your gut healthy begins with a good diet and supplementation as necessary. Exercise helps keep everything moving, and water is absolutely necessary. Chiropractic adjustments help remove interference in the messages from the brain to the gut, and help it function as it should too. Medications can upset this all important balance, as can stress, lack of sleep, and illness. Make sure to talk to your chiropractor or medical doctor about any concerns you have.

## Fact #2: Fevers Aren't the Enemy

We've been trained to fear fevers like they're the supervillain of every medical story. But plot twist: fevers are your body's

way of having a battle that viruses can't win. They crank up the temperature to make life uncomfortable for germs. So while you're bundled in blankets sweating and feeling bad, your immune system is turning up the heat on the bad guys, and you need to remember that there is a battle going on in your body to kill the bad guys and return you to health. Sometimes seeing the body reach a temperature of 102°F seems concerning, but you really don't need to seek medical care until your fever reaches 104°F which those with a healthy immune system seldom seem to experience.

## Fact #3: Your Immune System Has a Memory

Yep, it remembers things better than you do. (Still waiting to recall where you left your keys?) Once it meets a virus or bacteria, it stores that info like a biological Rolodex. When you get sick, your body immediately goes to that Rolodex and starts producing the needed cells to fight the illness. If you have a strong and healthy immune system, your body can even fight off viruses and bacteria without you even knowing you're sick in the first place. This is also the reason why kids seem to catch more illnesses than adults. Kids have less overall exposure to germs than adults do, and they are adding all that information to their Immunity Rolodex.

## Fact #4: Stress Makes It Lazy

Ever noticed how you always catch a cold after finals, a breakup, or hosting your in-laws? Chronic stress overwhelms your immune system. It is dealing with so many invaders at the same time in a weakened state that it just can't win the fight. At these times deep breaths and bubble baths seem like something you just don't have time for ... but they are exactly what you need. Self Care is necessary. Remember stress can be either physical, emotional, or nutritional, and it is kryptonite to your immune system.

Sleep also plays an important role in your immune defense. You're not just tired when you don't get enough sleep. Your immune defense drops up to 70% if you get one night of 4 hours or less of sleep. So get to bed early, your immune system will thank you.

Your immune system is working harder than your Wi-Fi router during a Netflix binge. It fights, learns, remembers, and adapts—all while you go about your day eating leftover pizza and forgetting to drink water. So maybe give it a little love—eat some



veggies, take a walk, and try not to stress about your emails. Your immune system is your own personal Superhero, designed to protect you—help keep it strong so it can keep your Galaxy safe from invasion.

**Join me at our FREE Wellness Class** where we'll dive into how to keep your immune system functioning at 100%. **Please join us at our Beaver Dam location for this FREE class on Tuesday, September 16th at 5:30pm.** Invite your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone who supports your health. You do not need to be a patient to attend.

Yours in Health,  
Dr. Stephanie Tyjeski



*Dr. Stephanie graduated in December 2016 with her Doctorate in Chiropractic at Logan University. She continued on at Logan University to receive her Masters in Nutrition and Human Performance. She is also certified as a Digestive Health Professional through the Loomis Enzyme Institute. She currently works at Tyjeski Family Chiropractic and Wellness Center where she offers personalized nutritional counseling.*



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# Harvest Time at Alsum Farms & Produce

By Ashley Posthuma



We associate the months of July and August with many things: sunshine, trips to the beach, cookouts with family and friends, and quality time spent outdoors. What the average person might not associate with this timeframe—but those at Alsum Farms & Produce certainly do—is the potato harvest.

Since 1973, the family-owned and operated agri-business has been headquartered in Friesland, Wisconsin. Alsum Farms & Produce is a vertically integrated family-owned farm, packing facility, and logistics company that provides quality potatoes and produce year-round.

In Wisconsin, the red and yellow potato harvest begins at the end of July, followed by russet potatoes in mid-August. With 2,700 acres of potatoes (and 300 acres of pumpkins!) to harvest, it's safe to say it's all hand on deck at Alsum Farms & Produce this time of year.

Alsum Farms plants potatoes at their two farming locations, Arena and Grand Marsh, Wisconsin; pumpkins are grown at their Grand Marsh farm. The Alsum Farms potato crop supplies about 50% of their potato volume for their customers; they wash, grade, package, and deliver additional potatoes, onions, and produce from several local farms and grower partners around the U.S. to supplement potatoes for the fresh market and serve customers year-round.

The process of packing fresh potatoes has certainly changed over the 52 years Alsum Farms & Produce has been in business, but they continue to invest in their state-of-the-art production facilities. When an Alsum semi pulls into the facility with a load of fresh potatoes, the trailer is slowly filled with water to float the potatoes out and into the facility's flume system. From there, the potatoes ride a conveyor belt into the grading line, enter the barrel washer, undergo a final rinse, and are dried on a sponge roller. During peak season, the conveyor belts are moving approximately 1,000 pounds of potatoes per minute!

After the potatoes are properly cleaned, they go through the sizing and grading process. This includes the inspection of manual and robotic graders who look for imperfections and make sure the potatoes are best in class.

The Alsums are always finding ways to innovate on their farms and in their production facilities. Currently, in the Friesland facility, they have installed two grading "spider robots" to make the process more accurate and efficient. They have also

updated the plant's primary sizer and sorter with machine-learning cameras; these provide visual inspections of potatoes as well as data to keep everything running smoothly, ensuring they're always packing the highest quality potatoes for customers and consumers.

This fall, the Friesland location will be installing solar panels on the rooftops of their office, warehouse, and production facility. This will allow them to generate enough power to fully fuel the facility with renewable energy!

In fact, sustainability and stewardship has always been at the forefront for Alsum Farms & Produce. CEO Larry Alsum is a founding member of the Wisconsin Healthy Grown® Program, a program that has guided their farm stewardship and sustainability practices since 1996.

"In 1992, we began farming, and by 1996 we had helped establish the Wisconsin Healthy Grown Program, Larry explains. "Since that time, the Healthy Grown program has continued to guide our farm sustainability practices utilizing Integrated Pest Management to efficiently manage inputs and implement conservation practices that enhance ecosystem efforts."

In addition to helping develop and rigorously adhering to the standards set forth by the Wisconsin Healthy Grown Program, Alsum Farms has also dedicated 50 acres of land to prairie restoration and pollinator habitat. As a business that works hand-in-hand with the land every day, they understand just how important it is to take care of our environment and promote sustainable practices for the future.

"Potatoes are perishable and grown from the sandy soils," the team adds. "The biggest challenge is striving to consistently grow a quality crop when Mother Nature is your business partner. Weather events influence the growing season and ultimately drive the year ahead."

Thankfully, the harvest this year looks promising. So as you're planning your autumn get-togethers and even cooking family meals during the week, don't forget to pick up a bag or two of Wisconsin Healthy Grown Certified Alsum Farms russet, red, and yellow potatoes. You can find them at your neighborhood grocers including Piggly Wiggly, Aldi, Woodman's, Costco, and independent retail grocers. They're nutritious, sustainably grown, and locally sourced—what more could you ask for?



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## Six Storage Tips to Keep Potatoes Fresh

1. **Buy quality potatoes.** Look for potatoes with smooth skin and minimal cuts, bruises, or soft spots. If you do buy a bag with an imperfect potato, remove it from the bag to prevent it from spreading to the others.
2. **Ventilate.** Although potatoes often come in convenient plastic bags, these aren't ideal for long-term potato storage as the plastic traps moisture and causes potatoes to spoil faster. Instead, store your potatoes in a cardboard box, paper bag, or wire basket for ventilation.
3. **Don't wash immediately.** The dirt on potato skins acts as a barrier to protect the potato while in storage. If you wash your potatoes before putting them away, the moisture may lead to bacteria growth. Instead, thoroughly wash your potatoes as you're preparing to cook them.
4. **Store in a cool, dark space.** Ideally, potatoes should be kept in a room that's 45-55°F, like a basement. They should never be stored in the fridge, and sunlight can cause them to become bitter. Potatoes sprout faster when stored in light, moist environments, like kitchen countertops.
5. **Avoid onions, bananas, and berries.** All three of these foods release a gas called ethylene, which speeds up the ripening process. This could affect your potatoes and speed their ripening as well.
6. **First in, first out.** Always use up any produce that is older before buying anything new. This will reduce food waste and keep your grocery bill down.

Want to watch the full potato process? Scan this QR code for a video walk-through!



## That's Amore! Potato Recipe

### Ingredients:

2 lbs Alsum reds, washed and cut into ¼ inch rounds  
1 Cup Diced fresh tomatoes  
2 Tablespoons Olive oil  
1 1/2 Tablespoons Italian seasoning  
1 Teaspoon Crushed red chili flakes  
2 Teaspoons Kosher salt  
1 Teaspoon Freshly ground black pepper  
8 Ounces Pepperoni slices  
3/4 Cup Part skim shredded mozzarella  
1/4 Cup Fresh basil

### Directions:

Preheat the oven or grill to 400°F. (If cooking over an open flame without a thermometer, be aware that time may vary slightly.)

Place the potatoes and tomatoes on top of a large square of aluminum foil. Drizzle with the olive oil and season with the Italian seasoning, crushed red chili flakes, salt, and pepper.

Wrap the foil around the food by creating an envelope style fold over the top and rolling the edges up. This will make it easier to check the potatoes for doneness. It also makes for easy serving.

Place the foil pouch into the oven or over the campfire on a grate. Allow it to cook, rotating the foil package around the heat from time to time to prevent scorching, for about 25 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

To finish the dish, top the potatoes and tomatoes with the shredded mozzarella cheese and place back in the oven or on the fire for just a few more minutes to allow the cheese to melt. Add the pepperoni on top and sprinkle with basil before enjoying.



# Lemon Butter Feta Chicken Pasta



## Ingredients

2 lb. bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (4 to 6)  
 2 tsp. dried oregano  
 Kosher salt  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil  
 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter  
 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth  
 1 cup heavy cream  
 Zest and juice of 1 large lemon  
 Pinch of red pepper flakes  
 1 lb. gemelli  
 2 oz. crumbled feta, plus more for serving  
 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley, plus more for serving

## Directions

Pat chicken dry with paper towels; season with oregano, salt, and black pepper.

In a large, high-sided skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add chicken skin side down and cook, turning occasionally, until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce heat to medium and melt butter. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add broth, cream, lemon zest, lemon juice, and red pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring often, then add pasta and return chicken to skillet. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until pasta is al dente and an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 165°, 18 to 20 minutes.

Transfer chicken to a plate. Add feta to pasta mixture and stir until melted. Stir in parsley.

Return chicken to skillet. Top with more feta and parsley.



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Friday, **September 19** - Beaver Dam Wine Tour - Downtown Beaver Dam

Saturday, **September 20** - Flea Market and Craft Fair - Dodge County Fair Grounds

Friday through Sunday, **September 26 - 28** - Fall Living History - Marsh Haven Nature Center

Saturday, **October 4** - 32nd Annual Badger Classic Golf Outing - Old Hickory Golf Club

**October 17 - 31** - Scarecrows on Parade- Downtown Beaver Dam

Saturday, **October 25** - Fall Downtown Fest and Casket Races - Downtown Beaver Dam



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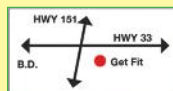


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9am - 3:30pm

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10:30 - 11:30am

11:30am

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2:15pm - 3:30pm



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Find All the Details at [BeaverDamPepperFestival.com](http://BeaverDamPepperFestival.com)





# Hymenoptera (“Bee”) Allergy – What You Should Know

By David Peloza, MD – Allergy and Immunology

Stinging insects belong to the order Hymenoptera, and there are five flying insects that are well known to cause allergic reactions. They can be divided into vespids (wasp, white and yellow hornet, and yellow jacket), and aphids (honeybee).

For the vast majority of people, after being stung, they develop a small, localized reaction at the site of the sting that usually resolves by the next day. However, systemic reactions (reactions distant from the site of the sting) can include a variety of symptoms ranging from mild to severe and fatal.

Severe stinging insect allergy affects over 9.5 million Americans including 3 percent of adults and up to 1 percent of children. Those with a history of a severe reaction are at significantly increased risk for another systemic reaction – adults who have

experienced anaphylaxis with a sting have a 60 to 70 percent chance of having a similar or more severe reaction with the next.

Allergy testing can be performed to determine which insects you are allergic to. Fortunately, venom immunotherapy (“desensitization”), which is the only available treatment that can potentially prevent further anaphylactic reactions, demonstrates remarkable efficacy with high protection rates against future anaphylactic reactions. Additionally, an epinephrine autoinjector is recommended for patients with a history of severe reaction. A board-certified allergist/immunologist can help review your clinical history, diagnose and treat Hymenoptera allergy.

For more information regarding allergy and immunology services, visit [www.PrairieRidge.Health](http://www.PrairieRidge.Health)



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# Caring for the Whole Person: My Journey in Internal Medicine

By Dr. Mesfin Abera - Marshfield Medical Center-Beaver Dam



Since joining Marshfield Medical Center-Beaver Dam (MMC-BD) in April, I've had the privilege of meeting many wonderful patients and becoming part of a community that values health, trust, and connection. As an internal medicine physician, I'm passionate about bedside care—the art of using knowledge, training and my God-given senses to make a diagnosis—and most importantly, building meaningful relationships with my patients.

My fascination with the human body began early, but it was during my clinical rotation in internal medicine that I truly found my calling. The complexity of the field, the need for compassion, discipline, and hard work—it all resonated deeply with me. These qualities are not just part of the job; they are part of who I am.

In my practice, I care for adults with chronic conditions like hypertension, asthma, COPD, and diabetes. I also provide preventive care, including wellness visits, medication management, and routine screenings. I believe in treating the whole person, not just the illness. That means listening carefully, offering evidence-based care, and ensuring each patient feels seen, heard, and respected.

I'm especially drawn to the challenge of diagnosing and managing complex conditions. Whether it's performing joint injections, skin biopsies, or cryotherapy, I find great satisfaction

in offering both immediate relief and long-term solutions. Every patient is unique, and I strive to tailor care to each individual's needs and goals.

My medical journey began at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, where I earned my Doctor of Medicine and completed my first internal medicine residency. Later, I continued my training with an internship and residency at Virginia Commonwealth University. These experiences shaped my approach to medicine—grounded in science, guided by empathy.

Outside of work, I enjoy traveling, reading, and spending time with my family. These moments help me recharge and remind me of the importance of balance and connection—values I bring into every patient interaction.

To me, internal medicine is more than a profession—it's a calling. I'm honored to walk alongside my patients on their health journeys, offering care that is compassionate, comprehensive, and centered on trust.

Since arriving in Dodge County, I've been deeply touched by how friendly and welcoming both my patients and colleagues have been. It's a joy to be part of such a warm and supportive community, and I look forward to building a long and fulfilling career here.

Dr. Mesfin Abera practices out of MMC-BD's primary care clinic in Beaver Dam. He can be reached at 920-887-5975.



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# What is a Diabetic Eye Exam and Why is it Important?

By Marshfield Clinic Health System

Living with diabetes requires careful management of various aspects of your health, and one crucial area that often gets overlooked is eye health. Regular diabetic eye exams are essential for detecting and preventing serious eye conditions that can lead to vision loss.

## Diabetic retinopathy and other diseases

Diabetes, whether type 1 or type 2, can lead to several eye complications over time. High blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels in the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This condition, known as diabetic retinopathy, is a leading cause of blindness in adults.

Blindness aside, problems from diabetes can cause blurred or distorted vision, trouble with color vision and blind spots. Additionally, people with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing other eye conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts.

The prevalence of diabetic eye disease is significant:

- **Diabetic retinopathy:** In 2021, an estimated 9.6 million people in the United States were living with diabetic retinopathy. Of these, 1.84 million had vision-threatening diabetic retinopathy.
- **Age factor:** Among people with diabetes, the prevalence of diabetic retinopathy was lowest among those younger than 25 years (13.0%) and highest among those aged 65-79 years (28.4%).

## What to expect during a diabetic eye exam

Many diabetic eye conditions do not show symptoms until they advance and are harder to treat. That's why people living with diabetes should have a diabetic eye exam at least once a year.

Diabetic eye exams are similar to routine, comprehensive eye exams. Patients can expect to have their eye pressure measured, vision assessed, and their eyes will be dilated. In some

cases, retinal photographs and other imaging instruments can assess for diabetic retinopathy or other diabetic pathology.

If signs of retinopathy are found during an exam, more frequent visits are typically recommended. Furthermore, patients should reach out to their eye doctor if they notice any changes in their eyesight. That may include blurry vision, floaters, or if they feel their vision has changed color.

## An added bonus

Not only are diabetic eye exams a non-invasive, vital piece to managing diabetes, they can also be a checkup of your overall health.

During dilated eye exams, doctors can get a real-time look at a person's blood vessel health. The blood vessels in the retina have the same structure, function and potential problems as blood vessels throughout the body. By looking in the back of an eye, we can get a good gauge on vascular system health throughout the entire body.

Eye exams are a critical component of diabetes management. There are many treatments for diabetic eye conditions, but the best one is prevention.

Monitoring blood sugar levels, proper diet and exercise, taking prescribed medications and meeting with your primary care provider or endocrinologist regularly are all essential when treating diabetes.

With experienced board-certified ophthalmologists and optometrists, the Marshfield Medical Center-Beaver Dam Eye Clinics offer advanced care for cataracts, glaucoma, refractive errors, macular degeneration, dry eye, diabetic retinopathy, blepharitis and more. Our comprehensive eye care also provides full-service eye exams and optical services with more than 1,000 frames. Contact our locations in Beaver Dam (920-887-1151) and Waupun (920-324-3191) to make an appointment.

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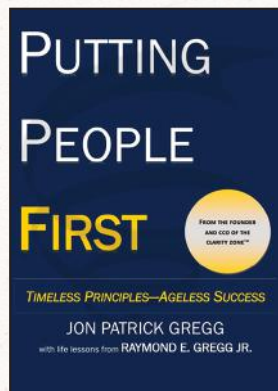


Cory Springstroh  
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Marshfield Medical Center  
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## Putting People First

Timless Principles - Ageless Success

By Jon Patrick Gregg and  
Raymond E. Gregg Jr. (2025)

In *Putting People First*, this local father-son duo invite readers into a world where leadership is measured not by control, but by connection. This collection of stories and insights underscores a timeless truth: organizations flourish when people feel seen, valued, and empowered.

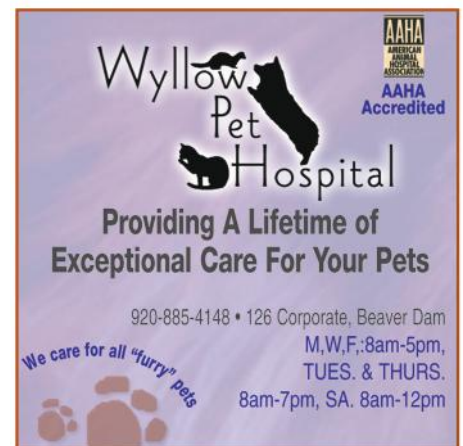
With their roots in Dodge County, Jon and Ray write with clarity and conviction. Ray, who served as General Manager of John Deere Horicon Works for over 20 years, brings deep leadership experience alongside Jon's professional lessons from healthcare and technology. What emerges is more than a leadership guide—it is a call to lead and live with heart. The message is simple yet transformative: *Putting People First* is a strategic advantage!

Too often, skills like empathy and relationship-building are dismissed as "soft." *Putting People First* reframes these as foundational strengths—an especially affirming message for women and others whose contributions in these areas are undervalued. The book elevates the very traits that too often go unrecognized, highlighting how they can foster innovation, resilience, and trust at every level of an organization.

*Putting People First* offers inspiration without pretense. It reminds us that true influence begins with how we listen, how we align attention with intention, and how we honor human dignity. A powerful read for leaders—and those aspiring to lead—who recognize that real progress is built on people and purpose.

*Putting People First* is available for online purchase in hard or soft cover at [www.jonpatrickgregg.com/shop](http://www.jonpatrickgregg.com/shop).

Join the Hometown Book Launch on **September 13th from 2-4 p.m. at the American Legion Post 157 in Horicon.**



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Weed and Wine party from L to R: Chris Sell, Jocelyn Sell Men-tuis, Kriag Kasten, Kari Kasten, Kristi Hartzheim, Tina Swain, Stacy Griswold & Cindy Spangler. Inset: Diana & Greg Ogle.

# The Impact of Volunteering

By Dorothy Bliskey

Taking a fellow citizen under their wing is exactly what volunteers did after a tornado slammed into the Juneau home of Greg and Diana Ogle on May 15 just as she was about to start dinner. While the rebuilding of their damaged home continues, the Ogles are staying at a friend's house in Beaver Dam.

Diana, who hurried to the lower level and thought Greg was following, described the sounds of the tornado as horrific. "The sound hurt my ears... my breath was taken out of my body. It sounded like bowling balls hitting the house. I could hear glass breaking, wood cracking and massive rain."

As the tornado struck its fierce blows, she realized from a loud knocking sound that Greg was trapped outside the house. With adrenaline pumping through Diana's veins, like Super Woman, she was able to force open the jammed and damaged door and pull her husband inside their house. He was soaked with rain but uninjured.

Greg had been trying to retrieve a glass-topped table in their lower level four-season room.

"He saw the entire porch get lifted off the foundation and hurled through the air," Diana said. "We lost everything on the porch, including the gas fireplace. We had no roof. Water was rushing down the stairs."

In the aftermath, when the Ogles went outside, it looked like a war zone. Huge trees, some 200 years old, were uprooted. "Our roof was across the street in Clearview's parking lot. All in all, our entire house except for the kitchen was damaged," Diana said. Volunteers – friends and strangers alike – came to their rescue.

## Pepper Fest Volunteers Step Up

On a side note, Diana heads the annual Pepper Fest event in Beaver Dam, which coincidentally is taking place on September 13. Several of the 50+ volunteers from that event also turned up at her house in May to help after the tornado.

Bernie Butterbrodt – a Pepper Fest volunteer who Diana refers to as "king of the grill," brought his enclosed trailer to transport Diana's many plants to his house in Beaver Dam. It's also where Diana and Greg are living until their house renovations are completed sometime later this fall.

Diana also credits Hayden Gibbs of the Fox Lake area for being a huge help with moving heavy plants and furniture from their property.

"St. Vinny's stepped up and gave us clothes and supply vouchers," Diana said, "In return, when we go through our belongings that are in storage, we will gladly give back some of our items so they can help others."

Another Pepper Fest event volunteer, Stacy Griswold, arrived at Diana's house about 45 minutes after the tornado hit. "I truly don't know how she got here because the street was closed off. She apparently walked 3-4 blocks, and along the way found our cat Cubbie Lee that was missing – and she's allergic to cats! He came right to her."

"Stacy is THEE gal that gets it all together at Pepper Fest," Diana said, noting she oversees the many vendors and volunteers at the event.

Lisa Neumann, who lives in Mayville and knows Diana through business and Pepper Fest, was also a big help after the tornado. "Lisa helped organize my rooms before the restoration folks got here. She sorted all my undamaged clothes and jewelry. She is amazing. She prayed daily for us and all the other victims in Juneau, Mayville, Horicon and all of Dodge County."

Lisa recalled how Diana alerted her with a text that night, saying their house had been hit by the tornado. "She asked how we were and said she wanted to make sure we were safe. She also called to make sure we were in the basement. Diana is always thinking of others."

Then there was Tina Swain and her sister Cindy Spangler. "Those two stepped up to help feed all the volunteers and deliver



food on the daily,” Diana said. “They are over-the-top awesome! Greg and I owe them everything. They really took the lead on feeding the folks and helped us with hot dinners when we were exhausted!”

As if planning the annual Pepper Fest and dealing with the repercussions of a tornado disaster weren’t enough, Diana – the ultimate planner – came up with a Weed & Wine Party and promoted it on Facebook. “My flower garden was a hot mess,” Diana said, noting about 10 volunteers pulled weeds and the folks from Edwin Brix in Beaver Dam supplied the wine. “Tina Swain and Cindy Spangler supplied the charcuterie board. This was a HUGE labor of love. I so appreciated their efforts.”

“It makes me so happy to know I was able to help a friend in need,” Cindy said. “I know that in a blink of an eye, if that had been my house, Diana would have done the same for me. That’s what friends do.”

Cindy’s sister Tina, who has a passion for cooking, says it was a pleasure to help. “Diana’s heart is as big as her personality. Who wouldn’t want to help a friend like that,” Tina said, adding that her skills in the kitchen far outshine other tasks she could have helped with. “I knew a whisk in my hand was safer than a chainsaw in my hand. I know my limitations.”

Diana also created a “Chain Saw Party” to tackle more than 40 trees that were destroyed in their 4-house block. Volunteers saw the post on Facebook and came to the rescue to clean up the mess... Friends like Adam and Stacy Griswold from Griswold Excavating, Tim and Denise Fitzsimmons, Terry Fitzsimmons and Daune DeVries, to name a few.

#### Strangers Offer to Help


Even strangers showed up to lend a hand. Barb Heinzen, her two sons and a daughter, all in their 20s, arrived after Barb spotted a Facebook post the next morning, alerting her to damage at the Ogle’s home. “I saw the post the morning after the tornado as I was getting ready for work,” Barb said, noting that the night before she had told her kids they were fortunate not to have been hit and wished they could reach out to help someone.



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Above is the damage to their back porch. Cindy and Tina share a charcuterie board.



"I was able to take off work and my kids were able to come to help, too," Barb said. "When Diana saw us we introduced ourselves and said we were there to help. The first day we moved a lot of her indoor house plants. I am currently plant sitting for her as I have many of them in my living room. We also moved plants and outdoor stuff to other people's homes and cleaned up the back of the house. My boys went back a few days later to help with tree removal."

"We didn't even know them," Diana said, noting Barb said God called her to help. "She and her kids were over-the-top amazing! Greg and I are truly blessed to have so many people step up and help."

### Pepper Fest – Volunteers Galore

As Pepper Fest appears for the 12th year, it brings with it a dedicated organizer -- Diana -- and a crew of more than 50 volunteers. All are still in awe of each other and the ongoing efforts to not only recover from the tornado, but also to make sure the festival on September 13 is the best ever.

### So, Why is it Called Pepper Fest?

In the early 1900s, immigrants arrived in Beaver Dam from Hungary, secretly transporting special pepper seeds in the hems of their trousers and dresses to replant in their new homeland. If the seeds weren't hidden from sight on their ocean voyage to America, officials would have confiscated them. The tasty Hungarian peppers grew well in the fertile soil of Beaver Dam.

Several families of Hungarian immigrants continue to grow the heirloom peppers. Thousands are harvested and used in various foods and beverages at Pepper Fest -- plus, you can

purchase the freshly grown peppers at the festival. Some are bold, some are not too hot. (Removing the seeds lowers the hotness factor a bit.)

The festival runs from 9am -3:30pm at the Park Village Shopping Center, located at the intersection of Hwys 151/33 in Beaver Dam. For details, visit: [BeaverDamPepperFestival.com](http://BeaverDamPepperFestival.com).

Highlights include a Chili cook-off contest judged by Miss Wisconsin, a contest to find the longest pepper, live music, square dancing, 60 vendor booths, and lots of food and drink featuring the Beaver Dam pepper -- such as Apple-Pepper pies, pepper brats, pepper biscuits and pancakes, pepper beer and pepper wine (a new addition this year). A history booth, overseen by local historian and volunteer Tim Csiacsek, is also an interesting element at the festival. His grandmother was one of the immigrants who brought pepper seeds to Beaver Dam more than 100 years ago.

"Bringing folks together to celebrate a pepper named after our fair city of Beaver Dam, celebrating the heritage of the families, and keeping the story alive is my greatest joy," Diana said, giving credit to all the volunteers who help.

"Without volunteers, this event would NEVER get off the ground. This is a tight team of dedicated folks with a passion for helping!"

"I am so grateful for every one of them. My husband and I are still amazed and overwhelmed by all those who volunteered to help us recover after the tornado. We are truly blessed."

### The Value of Volunteering

Volunteers can be found doing good deeds in so many places -- from helping at schools, churches, libraries, ballparks, community events, food pantries, and homeless shelters -- to going to the aid of those affected by fires and weather-related disasters to name a few.

Why do people feel compelled to volunteer? In general, it's a desire to help others -- to improve the health and welfare of people in a community. By helping others, the volunteer also benefits. Volunteers, especially retirees, often report acquiring a new sense of purpose, a boost in self-esteem, and an increase in social interaction.

Ed Gurno has volunteered weekly at a medical clinic and hospital in Fond du Lac since 2009. He transports patients by wheelchair to and from doctor appointments, helping them get to their appointments in a timely manner. "Some people have great difficulty walking. It's a pleasure to help them," Ed said, adding that in the process he makes new connections with patients, medical staff and other volunteers. It's a win-win.

Jane Gurno (Ed's wife) and Linda Vollmer volunteer weekly at the St. Vincent de Paul resale store in Fond du Lac. Both stock shelves and create eye-catching displays.

Their efforts help meet the bigger objective of serving the less fortunate in the community. Jane says she volunteers, in part due to her mother setting an example as a volunteer for church programs and neighbors in need. "I am living up to my mother's expectations," Jane said.

"My belief is that your community is an extension of your family," Linda said. "There are many difficult issues that need to be addressed. We should take our fellow citizens 'under our wing' when the need arises."



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**Have you been told you  
have gum disease?**

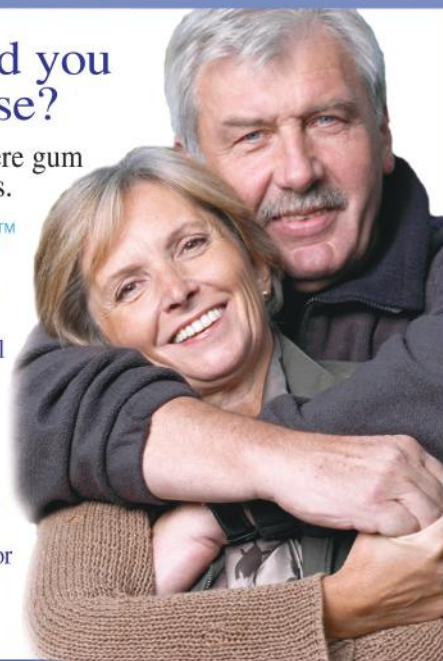
There is a Laser way to treat severe gum disease without cutting or stitches.

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Finally, there's good news for those who suffer from gum disease (gingivitis and periodontitis). Through Laser Periodontal Therapy, we can treat your moderate to severe gum disease so you can quickly return to your normal routine!

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If you suffer from tender, red, swollen or bleeding gums, call us today for an appointment to evaluate your condition.



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# InSpire Magazine's Restaurant Guide

## Beaver Dam County Club

The 1966 Bar & Restaurant located in the South entrance of the Beaver Dam Country Club. Wednesday night bar opens at 4, dinner service 4:30 to 8pm, Friday night bar opens at 4, dinner service 4:30 to 9pm, Sunday Brunch 10:30 - 1:30pm. Check out our specials on Facebook!

## Boat House Pub & Eatery

N10575 Chief Kuno Trail - Fox Lake (920) 928-3470

Open Wed - Sun 11am - Close, Mon 3pm - Close. Daily Specials - all you can eat Wings, Wednesday "Dollar Days", Sandwich Menu, Homemade Half-Pound Burgers & Pizza, Children's Menu, Weekend Dinner Specials

## Buchanan's One Away

118 Lake Street, Hustisford - (920) 349.3400

Homemade Pizza - Serving thin and New York crust pizzas. Check website for current hours.

## Feil's Supper Club

2 miles south of Randolph on Hwy 73 (920) 326-5544

Herb's famous homemade bread, onion rings and salad bar. [www.feilssupperclub.com](http://www.feilssupperclub.com)

## Higher Grounds Coffee Shop

N7156 E Plaza Drive - Beaver Dam (920) 885-4990

Serving coffee, specialty drinks, desserts & soups. Sandwiches, drive through & meeting room available.

## Iron Ridge Inn

131 S. Main Street - Iron Ridge (920) 387-3348

Open: Tues - Sat. 4:30 p.m. Sundays 10:00 - 1:30 pm

Family Owned Supper Club Est. 1972. Serving Up: Choice Cut Steaks, Prime Rib, Seafood, Broasted Chicken and Pizzas; Friday Fish Fry & Sunday Brunch. Banquet Room (Seats 150) For All Occasions. [www.ironridgeinn.com](http://www.ironridgeinn.com)

## Lake Street Inn

147 North Lake Street - Hustisford (920) 349-8936

Hours: Wednesday & Thursday - 11am to 8pm, Friday 11am to 9pm, Saturday - 4pm to 8pm. Excellent Friday Fish Fry from 1pm to 9pm, Saturday featuring Prime Rib, Rack of Ribs, and full menu. Private parties welcome.

## Old Hickory Dining

W7596 Hwy 33 East - Beaver Dam (920) 887-7179

An expanded lunch menu is available Monday - Friday from 11:00am-3:00pm from Memorial Day - Labor Day. Monday dinner service available Memorial Day - Labor Day. Enjoy casual dinner service on select weeknights. Hours and menu vary seasonally. Fish Fry is available most Friday evenings from 4:00-8:30pm. Special Events (up to 250 guests) welcome. Facebook: Old Hickory Golf Club. [www.oldhickorygolfclub.com](http://www.oldhickorygolfclub.com)

## Park Avenue Sports Cafe

709 Park Ave - Beaver Dam (920) 885-4510

Mon - Fri 11am - late night, Sat & Sun 7am to late night (serving breakfast), Family Friendly Atmosphere. [www.parkavesportscafe.com](http://www.parkavesportscafe.com)

## The Shores of Fox Lake

N10604 Chief Kuno Trail - Fox Lake (920) 928-2576

Experience the charm of a Wisconsin-style Supper Club serving a variety of traditional favorites and contemporary dishes. Indulge in flavors of our succulent prime rib, signature Friday Fish Fry, and classic Old Fashioneds (just to name a few!) Join us Fridays and Saturdays from 4pm to 9pm and Sundays and Mondays from 4:30pm to 9pm. Open Thursdays May 1st - September 30th. Voted Dodge County's Best Supper Club 2 Years in a Row! Visit us on Facebook: The Shores of Fox Lake Steakhouse [www.theshoresoffoxlake.com](http://www.theshoresoffoxlake.com)

## Sinissippi Lake Pub

N4571 County Road E - Hustisford (920) 349-9333

Fantastic Food & Sensational Service

Follow us on Facebook for our hours, menu, daily specials and exciting events.

## Snapper Vick's Mexican Restaurant

N5007 Country Road WS - Woodland (920) 625-3441

Closed Monday, Tue - Sun 4:30 - 9pm, Famous for Mexican entrées.





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