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Market Street Boutique owner Maggie Simmons recalls her start in retail in 2020. **Kris Leonhardt photo**

De Pere's Market Street Boutique unveils new look

BY PRESS TIMES STAFF
DE PERE - Downtown De Pere's Market Street Boutique unveiled a new look on May 10, following the completion of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) 24-hour Main Street Makeover contest. While renovations have been in process over the last few months, much of the finishing work took place in the final 24-hours.

WEDC and the Retailworks worked with Market Street Boutique owner Maggie Simmons to create a space that was welcoming to customers and would improve the overall shopping experience. "With assistance from WEDC and Retailworks Inc., a Milwaukee-based retail branding and design company, Market Street Boutique updated its indoor space and added exterior signage to increase

visibility. The business, which opened its doors in 2020, has developed a loyal customer base, specializing in on-trend clothing, unique gifts and stylish accessories for women of all ages and sizes," a WEDC release stated. "The makeover seeks to make the interior space more inviting and engaging as the business continues to

See **BOUTIQUE** page 4

Breaking the cycle: Substance abuse — a constant across generations

BY KRIS LEONHARDT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As generational cycles occur, negative patterns and traits are known to transfer through multiple generations via learned behavior, family dynamics and environment.

We continue to explore five northeast Wisconsin inter-generational family issues — physical health, alcoholism and drug use, mental health, education and housing — and what some organizations are doing to address the trends.

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN - Substance abuse — alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs — has been a constant across all generations; however, these behaviors may look a little different from age group to age group.

The hallucinogens of the 1960s and 1970s, the cocaine and methamphetamine fixation of the 1980s and 1990s and the crystal meth craze of the 2000s are

a few examples of how use can change over generations. The tobacco pipes and cigarettes of yesterday are another example, as they become the vaping products of today.



Alcohol was the most common substance used across all generations, while marijuana was the second-most-used drug throughout all generations. **Stock photo**

Current trends

The "National Survey on Drug Use and Health" is prepared by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration — a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service — each year to provide a snapshot of substance use in the country.

The 2020 report shows that among those ages 12 and older, 58.7% had used tobacco, alcohol or an illicit drug in the previous month, including the 50% who drank alcohol, 18.7% who used a tobacco product and 13.5% who used an illicit drug.

Among people aged 12 or older, See **SUBSTANCE ABUSE** page 9

Spinning a yarn and doing it with love

BY MELANIE ROSSI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

DE PERE - In her new children's book, "Spin Me A Yarn: A Sweater's Story", De Pere resident Jenny Von Der Ruhr teaches that "doing something with love can elevate it into something special" — and nowhere is that theme more evident than through the process of creating the book itself.

Jenny Von Der Ruhr's picture book, spotlighting hand-knit mice and the magic of love, is perfect for children, their parents and anyone in love with knitting.

Born in the Milwaukee area, Von Der Ruhr graduated from Marquette University with a degree in social work and moved to De Pere with her husband in 1999.

As a kid, Von Der Ruhr said, she always thought that writing chil-



De Pere author, Jenny Von Der Ruhr spotlights hand-knit mice and the magic of love in her picture book. **Submitted photo**

children's books would be her passion when she was older.

With her degree, however, she

pushed her desire to the side, working for many years in her stable job as a social worker.

Only after staying home to raise her two daughters did the idea return to her to write her own book.

"We did a lot of reading together," Von Der Ruhr said. "I read to them from the time they were infants. Even when they were ten and twelve, I still read a lot to them."

While reading together with her daughters resparked her desire to write her own book, working as a library aide at Dickinson Elementary in De Pere truly reignited her passion.

"I think I just really realized that stories are a really natural and delightful way to share ideas, thoughts and feelings about the world and relationships in a way that kids can really receive without adults being heavy-handed about lessons," Von Der Ruhr

See **YARN** page 7

Veterans helping veterans

BY MELANIE ROSSI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

DE PERE - To support the families of a recently deployed Green Bay unit, the Soldier and Family Readiness Group (SFRG), De Pere Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 2113 and Village Roasters are partnering to hold a special fundraiser.

Green Bay's 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion recently deployed to Eastern Europe and will be there for nearly a year.

Proceeds from two specific

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE
from page 1

20.7% used tobacco products or used an e-cigarette or other vaping device to vape nicotine in the past month.

However, nearly two-thirds of those aged 12-17 who used nicotine products in the past month, 63.1% vaped nicotine but did not use tobacco products.

Meanwhile, of those ages 26 or older that used nicotine products, 88.9% used only tobacco products.

Alcohol was the most common substance used across all generations, while marijuana was the second-most-used drug throughout all generations.

Root of the cause

A 2019 report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that if all children grew up in a home free from alcoholism, mental illness, drugs and domestic violence, depression would drop by 44% and there would be 24% less alcoholism and 33% less smokers.

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are most often passed from generation to generation.

During a February presentation, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Trauma-Informed Care Coordinator Scott A. Webb said that approximately 16% of the Wisconsin adult population report four or more ACEs.

Webb referred to this as the “tipping point,” making those individuals twice as likely to smoke, seven times more likely to experience alcoholism and 10 times more likely to inject street drugs.

Failures in addressing

According to the American Lung Association’s 21st annual “State of Tobacco Control” report, Wisconsin received mostly failing grades for policies created to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

“Wisconsin lags behind when it comes to tobacco control policies, and as a result, (and despite reductions over the past decades) we still have higher than average adult smoking rates at 13.3%, and 22.2% of high school students use a tobacco product,” said Molly Collins, director of advocacy for the American Lung Association in Wisconsin. “This gives us an important opportunity to improve the health of our state through proven policies, such as increasing tobacco prevention and control program funding.”

Despite receiving \$721 million in tobacco settlement payments and tobacco taxes, the state only funds tobacco control efforts at 12% of the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Successes in awareness

Last September, Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach and Public Health Officer Anna Nick declared fentanyl a community health crisis in Brown County and earlier this year announced a local push in response.

Last year, the Brown County Drug Task Force seized about 10,000 grams of fentanyl, compared to about 1,100 grams seized in 2021.

“We’re seeing fentanyl as



the No. 1 issue facing northeast Wisconsin as far as a drug,” Brown County Sheriff Todd Delain said during a recent press conference.

“Fentanyl and opioid misuse know no boundaries, and it has been our mission to raise awareness of how communities across Wisconsin can better tackle this invasive threat,” Streckenbach explained. “Brown County and Waukesha County have created blueprints that provide all 72 counties with the tools necessary to help with their own awareness campaigns. We continue to work with the state and Wisconsin Counties Association to make this a state-wide campaign.”

The awareness campaign was completed through billboards, social media, mailers and through a partnership with county school districts in Brown County.

“If you ask your children what fentanyl is, would they be able to answer you?” Nick said. “Would they be able to tell you that just a little bit can be mixed into other drugs and can kill you? It may seem harsh, but this is the reality of the situation we’re facing that fentanyl just once can be deadly.”

The county was also involved in initiating a task force to promote prevention, response and recovery work occurring in the county and identify any gaps in those areas.

County officials also approved an Opioid Action Plan that outlines how Brown County allocated its portion of opioid settlement funds from manufacturers, distributors and retailers this spring, investing the funds over a 10-year period.

According to county officials, the funds are being used to “hire a clinical professional with disciplines in mental health treatment and addiction, to disburse a grant for local non-hospital detox services, to offer sober living support and case management for 10 to 12 new clients and to hire 2 new investigators within the Brown County Drug Task Force focusing investigating lethal and non-lethal opioid overdoses. This proposal includes an annual review of these expenditures to assure the methods chosen to abate the opioid crisis are effective.”

Integrated programs

Organizations such as

the Boys & Girls Club have instituted programs that work to prevent substance abuse.

“Boys & Girls Clubs across Wisconsin serve more youth-per-population than any other state in the country. We are working with more than 100,000 youth across 199 sites in 73 Wisconsin communities,” said Wisconsin Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs Director Andy Gussert.

The organization said that an estimated 75% of individuals with substance use disorders have experienced trauma.

SMART Moves — one of the club’s cornerstone programs — helps youth learn how to avoid substance abuse.

The program provided the following statistics regarding those behaviors.

- Every day, approximately 4,000 youth ages 12 to 17 try their first cigarette and 2,000 youth ages 12-17 abuse a prescription drug for the first time.

- Before the age of 13, 25.6% of youth report having their first drink of alcohol.

SMART Moves enacts club staff, peer leaders, parents and community representatives to engage with youth ages 6 to 15 to promote abstinence from substance abuse through the “practice of responsible behavior.”

The result of doing nothing

According to Wisconsin DHS data, the opioid epidemic affects all genders, all races and many age groups in both rural and

urban communities.

In 2021 — the latest full year of data available — there were 1,427 opioid-related deaths in state.

In the latest county numbers gathered by the DHS for deaths related to alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, three northeast counties ranked below the state average of 179.3 per 100,000.

Kewaunee County showed 106.8 per 100,000; Brown County showed 142.3 per 100,000; and Door County had 175.3 per 100,000.

Three northwest counties were above the state average — Manitowoc County: 283.2 per 100,000; Winnebago County: 189.9 per 100,000; and Outagamie County: 188.7 per 100,000.

This story is part of the NEW (Northeast Wisconsin) News Lab’s fourth series, “Families Matter,” covering issues important to families in the region. The lab is a local news collaboration in northeast Wisconsin made up of six news organizations, which includes Green Bay Press-Gazette, Appleton Post-Crescent, FoxValley365, The Press Times, Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Watch. UW-Green Bay’s Journalism Department is an educational partner. Microsoft is providing financial support to the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region to fund the initiative. The mission of the lab is to “collaborate to identify and fill information gaps to help residents explore ways to improve their communities and lives — and strengthen democracy.”

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