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#### APRIL 2024

### Vermilion Advantage



Mike Marron CEO/President

Lisa Thompson Data & Finance Administrator

Jodie Ingram Community Development Coordinator

> **Dana Rowland** Marketing & Communications



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Last month in my letter, I talked about the past. I'm going to try not to do that going forward. We must focus on the future and only reference the past to learn from where we've been. My old college rodeo coach, John Luthi, one of the greatest motivators I've ever been around, had funny sayings and euphemisms for focusing on the future. He'd say things like, "That is why God put eyes in the front of your head, so you could look forward" or "That is why the windshield is larger than your rear-view mirror." The lesson learned is the path to a better

tomorrow will lie in front of us.

Challenges will always present themselves. And challenges need solutions. We have several challenges that I'll discuss with you over the coming months and hopefully we'll also have some positive solutions to each of those challenges.

The first challenge is repairing relationships that may have frayed over the years with this organization and other groups. I think this challenge happened over time among many well-meaning groups and people. We are all strong-willed and passionate people. We've been successful because of our strength and those strengths come with strong opinions. Everyone is guilty of letting their ego get in the way from time to time. During my time in Springfield, I learned that if I wanted to get anything done, I had to set aside my pride, sit at the table with people I didn't agree with, and find a way forward that was acceptable to everyone. I intend to take the same approach in this job. In many instances Vermilion Advantage doesn't need to be the know-it-all expert at the table. The real experts are the business and community leaders who have been working hard to make Vermilion County a better place. In those instances, Vermilion Advantage should just be the facilitator, the conduit that makes things happen. We have a lot of smart, strong willed, and passionate people that just want the best for our County. Vermilion Advantage stands ready to be the glue that holds the County together as we move forward to a brighter tomorrow.

Mike Marron CEO/President Vermilion Advantage

Vermilion Advantage, through membership value, provides strategic leadership on critical large and small business issues - leading economic and workforce development, anticipating and responding to members' needs, addressing quality of life issues and providing a network of information and business contacts. Vermilion Advantage works regionally to bring opportunities to Danville and Vermilion County.

*Inside Vermilion County* is a monthly publication created by Vermilion Advantage to showcase our members and share good news about Vermilion County. Each issue is mailed to all Vermilion Advantage members and over 1,000 copies are distributed throughout Vermilion County.



# **Vermilion County EMA Serving Area Residents and Businesses**

People may be surprised to learn how many emergency preparedness and response areas fall under the Vermilion County Emergency Agency (EMA) Department. "Most people, when they hear EMA or Emergency Management, simply have no idea what we do," says Russell Rudd, Director of Vermilion County Emergency Management. "All they know is we're the guys that set off the tornado sirens.

Little-known areas where EMA is making a difference include coordinating facilities used as warming and cooling shelters, coordinating with utility companies on which areas need power restored quickest, and on-site advisement for businesses and residents on how to make their locations safer from a disaster.

The EMA Department is generally responsible for several public protection and emergency response coordination areas. They provide emergency alerting, warning and information to the public for various events. from natural events such as tornadoes and flooding, manmade events such as hazardous material spills/releases and technological events such as utility failures, cyber-attacks and transportation accidents. They provide post-event damage assessment and coordinate emergency sheltering and mass care for disaster victims. Additionally, they coordinate the county's plan to protect residents and businesses from future events. The team also coordinates with IEMA and FEMA for federal assistance grants and loans to recover from disaster events.

The office is staffed by Rudd and Joel Bird, Assistant Director.

"Public safety is priority number one for all our efforts," says Rudd. "We are focused on giving the residents of Vermilion County the earliest and most accurate information for any impending

necessary resources to assist emergency response personnel and for residents and businesses to recover from the event."

During the Covid 19 Pandemic, the EMA office coordinated the requests from local agencies (police, fire, EMS), nursing homes, hospitals, schools, etc., for emergency protective equipment (masks, gloves, gowns, etc.). They procured the needed items, took delivery and coordinated distribution. "We coordinated and assisted the Public Health Department and National Guard for the numerous vaccination clinics throughout the county," says Bird. "We also provided daily situational reporting to local stakeholders and IEMA in Springfield. Afterward, we also coordinated with local agencies and jurisdictions on applying for and receiving FEMA federal disaster relief grant monies."

### **Changes on the Horizon**

After ten years with EMA, Rudd is set to retire, and Bird will assume the director role. "My favorite part of the job was coordinating with the emergency response agencies and developing truly useful preparedness and response plans for both the local governments

events. Secondly, providing or procuring and the residents," says Rudd. "I plan on slowing down in retirement and looking forward to not having to answer phone calls and emails 24/7."

> Bird is most excited about continuing to help Vermilion County residents. "Vermilion County has always been my home," he says. "This is a way for me to help the people of the county. Information and public safety are my number one goal in my new position. Having a year to learn from Russ is also exciting."

Changes include implementing the Everbridge/Nixle Alerting system to share vital emergency information using cellphones, certification to send wireless alerts and emergency broadcast activation (EAS) messages, and increased information sharing via social media.

"With newer technology and more ways to communicate, we can hopefully get information to residents quickly," adds Rudd. "Signing up for the Nixle text alerts is beneficial. Social media is another way to see what is happening in the county."

Vermilion County Emergency Management can be found on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter).





# **City of Danville Community Relations**

American physician and author Mark Hyman once said, "The power of community to create health is far greater than any physician, clinic or hospital." I couldn't agree more, and that's why in the spring of 2021, I asked the City Council to create the **Community Relations Administrator** position. While formal responsibilities were outlined during the interview process, I informed candidates that their most important role would be to help me save Danville by changing how we think, feel, and speak about ourselves and improving our image to those outside of the city.

How would we achieve such a lofty goal? According to actress Teyonah Parris, "It only takes one person to mobilize a community and inspire change." Luckily for us, we were blessed to find such a person in Ashton Greer. Thanks to her leadership, vision, and work-ethic, what was just a position has transformed into a small but mighty Community Relations Division (CRD) that is making major progress towards our goals.

The CRD focuses on five primary areas: support of Neighborhood Associations, planning and implementing festivals and events, overseeing and producing city media and social media content, assisting with development projects, and developing and maintaining community partnerships. I want to spend some time sharing about one that means the most to many of you: First Fridays.

On the First Friday of each month, the CRD provides an entertaining event that brings people together in Downtown Danville to support local businesses, create positive experiences, and enhance the culture of our city. Thanks to our amazing sponsors, these events are free or low cost. They bring hundreds, and often thousands of people together to experience the charm, history, and culture of Danville. Cell phone data shows that the number of people in the area more than doubles and sometimes triples during these events.

Each November, our Harry Potter Fest is second to none! Vermilion Street becomes Daigon Alley, the County Administration Building becomes Hogsmeade, and the Library becomes Hogwarts! This event is so popular that I've met folks who traveled here just for it. There is a Texas couple who plans their vacation around the event.

Fire & Ice, held each January, is a treat for all! Hosted by the Palmer Arena, this event boasts ice-skating, sledding, fire spinners, a Fire Department obstacle course, and a host of other cool activities. It's heart-warming to see people grinning from ear-to-ear as they play and create memories together. A huge shoutout to our new Community Development Coordinator, Rheanna Ollis, for making this year's event so successful!



Perhaps my favorite event, Danville's Got Talent (DGT), happens at the Fischer each March. What I love about this event is it brings people from all walks of life together to support some of the most talented individuals in our community. Last year's winner, Jennie Lou Lang, had just moved to town less than one month before she auditioned. She told me, "I'm from California and have lived all over the country, but have never felt more welcome and supported than here in Danville. DGT opened that door for me, and First Fridays have continued to foster that strong sense of community that I've come to love."

Our CRD and the rest of the City Team will keep doing all that we can to make Danville an even better place to live, work, invest, and play!



# **Coffee Talk**

April 9: Express Employment 3160 N. Vermilion, Danville

May 14: City of Danville 17 W. Main Street, Danville

# CRIS Healthy Aging Taking Good Care of Area Adults

We recently talked with Lisa Miller, Executive Director of CRIS Health Aging in Vermilion and Champaign County. CRIS is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping older adults (aged 60-plus and individuals with disabilities aged 18-59) safe, healthy, and independent in their homes for as long as possible.

### What are the overall goals of CRIS?

Our goal is to promote quality of life and independence for the senior population. Our philosophy is to offer qualified clients as many services and programs as possible by collaborating with other providers, agencies, and healthcare organizations. CRIS services are funded through local, state & federal grants as well as philanthropic donations.

### Who would benefit from your

services? Clients who qualify for services include adults 60-plus, individuals with disabilities aged 18-59, and income-restricted and/or Medicaideligible residents. All individuals must reside in Vermilion or Champaign County. Also, each county offers different services based on grant funding. Exclusive to Vermilion County: Adult Protective Services, Community Care Program, Violent Crime Victim Assistance and Home Delivered & Congregate Meals. Services offered in both counties: Caregiver Program & Support Group, Reducing Social Isolation Program, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program, Memory Care Program, Aging Mastery Classes, and Money Management Program.

### What are your biggest inspirations? I am inspired to work with the 60-plus

population because I was raised by my paternal grandparents and Dad. I have



been surrounded by seniors my entire life, so working and spending time with them is definitely my comfort zone.

My personal inspiration is my son, Tyler, and watching him grow into an outstanding athlete and young man. He is graduating from Westville High School this May and then off to college. My husband John and I are excited to have a front-row seat in the next chapter of his life.

If there is just one thing you want the community to know about you or your organization, what would it be? In 2022, CRIS joined Carle Health in the Community Health division. This merger has been a perfect fit for us, including competitive wages and benefits to help us maintain and recruit qualified team members. Under the Carle umbrella, CRIS provides added services to our clients while complementing the care Carle Health and the Carle Community Health programs provide to patients throughout the community.

**Tell us about working with a client.** Last month, we received a call from a hospital social worker concerning a discharged patient with no source for food. The patient also has a disabled son living with him. The CRIS Team (Nutrition, Senior Information Services, and the Care Coordination Unit) worked together. We provided him with meals to take home from the hospital until delivery could be set up. The client thanked CRIS, saying he and his son would not have had anything to eat without our help. The client and his son obtained Home Delivered Meals until he could return to work.

### What are you most proud of related

**to CRIS?** We expanded our nutrition program and added two additional congregate (lunch) meals per week at our Senior Center. This is in addition to our Breakfast Café, which offers cookedto-order breakfasts Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 9 a.m., and our lunch meal is offered at the Hoopeston Multi-Agency on Wednesdays.

### How can people learn more about

**CRIS?** Please follow us on Facebook at CRIS Healthy Aging Vermilion County. Our website is CrisHealthyAging.org. You can reach our office by calling 217.443.2999.

### Vermilion Advantage

# **Coach John Spezia: Making His Mark Through Basketball Around the World**

John Spezia knew from an early age that coaching and travel would be a big part of his adult life. He is the Technical Director of the St. Kitts Basketball Association and President of Reach 1 Coach 1 Basketball Camps and Clinics, based in Danville.

"In terms of coaching, when I was in high school, my coaches influenced me," he says. "It also worked with my nephews and nieces who lived on our farm. In college, I helped with a camp in New York for the summer and really enjoyed it. I liked the teaching and later helping them attend college or get a job!"

Spezia's mother predicted his love for travel early on. "She said I had a certain part in my hair, and that was a sign I would travel several continents," he recalls, with a smile. "My grandfather was from Italy, and my grandmother on my mother's side was from Lithuania, so I always had that dream!"

His international work started while coaching the men's basketball team at Danville Area Community College (DACC). "When we played John Wood College, I noticed they had three players from Antigua who played extremely hard," he says. "I asked basketball official Darryl Lamps how I could meet with the basketball people in Antigua. He connected me. I met Randy Samuels, who had played on the Antigua national team. We developed a relationship that grew into camps, clinics and people from Antigua coming to Danville. The partnership grew to include basketball programs all over the world. "

Many of Coach Spezia's former players succeed at all levels of sports, business and non-profits. A perfect example is Jenzil Skerrit, a former DACC player from Montserrat in the West Indies, about three hours from Miami. "He attended Illinois Institute of Technology and then earned another



and then earned another degree in Land Economics in Kingston, Jamaica," says Coach Spezia. "He is now the Public Relations Officer of the Government of Montserrat. He assisted in building an indoor sports facility on the Island and started a mini-basketball program.

Coach Spezia's passions are helping potential student athletes get college scholarships and working with coaches to improve their coaching skills. He founded an organization to do just that.

Reach 1 Coach 1 is geared toward teaching fundamental basketball

skills to children from age six to adults. "We do the same with coaches and basketball programs, be it schools, colleges or countries.," says Coach Spezia. "We also assist potential student-athletes in any sport. We help them prepare for college and give them the proper exposure through camps, videos, and emails to colleges or universities." The organization also provides consulting expertise to set up athletic programs. Coach Spezia and his team speak to schools, companies, and social organizations across the US and around the world about team building, motivation, and leadership, as well as sports tourism.

Coach Spezia's early coaching career centered around the DACC men's basketball team, leading them to the national championship tournament. Then the world beckoned. He coached the Derby Storm, a pro team in England, took a tour team to Italy with former DACC players Mason Glick and Kelly Hipskins, and conducted basketball camps in Greece. For 19 vears, he's hosted camps in Antigua. St. Kitts, Trinidad, Turks, Dominica, Nevis, Barbuda, St. Maarteen, and Anguilla. Other stops included the Philippines, taking the Antigua/Barbuda Men's Basketball team to play in the FIBA World Cup 2020 in Suriname, Belize, and eventually to Montserrat, where the team won the championship.

His other activities include helping with the Greater Illiana Sports Hall of Fame Basketball Museum of Illinois, NJCAA National All-Star Game, Boys and Girls Club and Danville Lions Club. He is also a board member of the Basketball Museum of Illinois, Past President NJCAA Coaches Association, former member of the DACC Board of Trustees, past Chairman of the Palmer Arena and helped bringing the NJCAA D2 National Men's Basketball Tournament to Danville.

# **Express Employment Adds Partner and New Training Options**

Embracing change continues to make Express Employment a strong community partner. The company named Kylee Turner as a fourth business partner and added training as another of its core services.

Express Employment is a staffing agency committed to delivering comprehensive solutions for its clients, from general labor to executive leadership roles.

Shannon Risken, along with Richard and Lynn Yoerk, are excited to add Kylee Turner as a business partner. Turner has been with the company for four years. "The pride I feel in my journey with Express Employment is immeasurable," says Turner. "Starting as a Front Office Coordinator, I knew from the moment I started here that I could climb the professional ladder with dedication and leadership."

Risken's journey with the company unfolded over nearly a decade. "Having transitioned from the education field, I was in search of a professional environment that not only embraced teamwork but also thrived on it," she says. "Joining Express, I discovered a dynamic and collaborative atmosphere that surpassed my initial expectations. Welcoming Kylee Turner as our fourth partner is a moment of immense excitement for us."

This year marks a new chapter for the team as they add training to their list of services. "While we've been your go-to source for your employees, the introduction of new laws made us realize the vital role we can play as a source of knowledge," says Turner. "Harnessing Shannon's passion for training, we're blending our expertise to offer more than just placements."

In 2023, Express supported 174 companies in the region. "Our dedication extended beyond mere placements, as we actively assisted these organizations in securing employees to meet their unique organizational needs," says Risken. "Notably, our commitment to excellence was proved through the seamless payroll processing for an average of 250 individuals each week across a spectrum of industries."

Express Employment is located at 3160 N Vermilion in Danville. The company's territory covers Vermilion County, Fountain/Warren County, Iroquois County, and Edgar County. Other offices are an hour north and an hour south of the main office in Danville.



Local ownership is one thing that sets Express Employment apart. "Our commitment isn't merely professional; it's deeply personal because it's our community too," says Turner. "Witnessing Vermilion County thrive and become a home of choice is a heartfelt desire. Express Employment is more than an agency; it's a family. We make sure our service is not just a transaction but a personal commitment to the success and well-being of those we serve and the community we call home."

As a company, they are on a growth journey. Their aim is to assist a broader spectrum of companies in discovering the ideal talent for their internal teams.

Express partners with C.O.R.E. Re-Entry, an organization that offers rehabilitation and a kickstart to individuals reentering the workforce. The team also volunteers with the City of Danville for its "First Fridays" events.

To learn more about Express Employment, call 217-703-

4156, visit expresspros.com or email kylee.turner@expresspros.com or shannon.risken@expresspros.com.





# **Golden Nugget Danville is Going Strong**

Visitors and locals have flocked to Danville's Golden Nugget casino and restaurants for the last nine months. And there are more good times and great food on the horizon.

Golden Nugget Danville is where small-town charm meets a chance to win big, explains Brennen Barrigar, Director of Marketing. "We offer 500 state-of-the-art reel and video poker games, 14 table games including blackjack, minibaccarat, craps, roulette, three-card poker, as well as a variety of exciting promotions, sweepstakes, giveaways and drawings to our players every month."

### Fun

The distinctiveness of Golden Nugget Danville is evident in personalized service and a uniquely welcoming environment. "We focus on ensuring every visitor experiences a sense of belonging and enjoyment the moment they step through our doors," says Jessica Lamb, Marketing Coordinator. "What truly sets us apart is our ability to combine a relaxed atmosphere with the thrill of continuous gaming action." Golden Nugget Danville boasts live entertainment every Friday and Saturday. The gaming area is open daily from 8 AM to 4 AM.

The organization's 24K Club allows guests to earn points, free play, tier credits, and event invitations based on their

play. Members stay informed via monthly mailers and emails and can participate in members-only promotions.

The team is constantly brainstorming fun and interactive events, promotions and giveaways. Barrigar says upcoming events include:

\*The \$250,000 Golden Global Getaway promotion continues in April. Every Friday and Saturday, \$500 free play is given away during Early Bird and Red Eye drawings at 8 PM and 10 PM. At 9 PM, one winner will be selected to win a trip valued at \$10,000. "On April 26 and 27, the grand prize will be bumped up to a luxurious \$20,000 trip package as well as a set of Louis Vuitton luggage!" adds Barrigar.



\*Swing for the Green, a live game golf promotion, begins every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in April. Members playing with their 24K Club card will be randomly selected during hourly drawings from 2 PM-8 PM to putt for up to \$1,200 free play.

\*"Carry-On" gifts will be offered to 24K Club members on Sundays in April.

\*Free 40-ounce Adventure Tumblers will be given away in April, on Mondays and Tuesdays, to 24K Club Members aged 55+ along with a 55% discount off breakfast or lunch at the Front Row Bar & Grill.

### Food

The location includes two popular food options: Front Row Bar & Grill, a quick-serve dining experience that serves sandwiches, salads, gelato, and more. Saltgrass Steakhouse is an award-winning steakhouse famous for its Certified Angus Beef® brand steaks, known for their superior quality. Saltgrass also offers fresh seafood, chicken, juicy burgers, sandwiches, salads, and more.

### Staff

Golden Nugget Danville employs about 250 staff members. They are currently hiring for many positions, including dealers. "We are always on the lookout for individuals passionate about customer service and the entertainment industry," says Lamb. "Our team unites experienced professionals, some with decades of casino experience, and vibrant newcomers. At the helm, our trailblazing General Manager stands out, championing women in the gaming industry. Their collective dedication fuels our success." Job seekers can find more information and apply at goldennugget.com/danville.

Since opening in Danville, the team has been impressed by the community's cohesion and support for local businesses. "There's a strong sense of pride in Vermilion County, and the willingness of residents to support each other, especially through challenging times, has been inspiring and beneficial for operating a business here," says Lamb.

To learn more about Golden Nugget Danville, visit goldennuggetdanville.com or follow them on Facebook @Golden Nugget Danville.



# VermilionAdvantage

# CASA Hosting 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Night at the Races

On Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, there is no better place to be than at Turtle Run in Danville for Night at the Races. For the tenth year, the popular event will support the work of CASA of Vermilion County.

The organization has provided child advocacy services for area children in foster care since 2008.

Night at the Races is a virtual horse racing event. "There will be eight horse races playing on a screen that people will place bets

on utilizing 'Betting Bucks' that are available for purchase," explains Elizabeth Mellen-Irle, Executive Director. "These are actual races that have occurred at horse racing venues in years past. Each race will generate three cash prize winners."

Happy Hour starts at 6 pm, and races begin at 7 pm. Raffle tickets, 50/50 tickets and live and silent auctions will also occur during the evening. Classic Homes is the presenting sponsor.

"We have a little something for everyone- a live and silent auction, a chance to place bets and win big on horse races, raffle tickets, photo opportunities, great food, plenty of drinks, wonderful people and a worthy cause to support," says Mellen-Irle. "The excitement in the room, as people cheer for the horse they bet on to win, is palpable."

### About CASA of Vermilion County

CASA of Vermilion County recruits, trains and supervises community volunteers to serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court System. The Juvenile Court Judge appoints CASA volunteers to conduct an independent investigation of the child's circumstances and submit their findings with recommendations to the Court via a written report. The advocate visits their appointed child regularly and



Left to right: Elizabeth Mellen-Irle, Executive Director; Connor Gilonske, Unassigned Case Manager; Shayne Cassidy, Advocate Coordinator; Macy Davis, Advocate Coordinator.

interviews relevant people in the child's life, including but not limited to foster parents, biological parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, doctors, counselors, therapists, the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and the State's Attorney. The advocate may observe parent/child visitations, work closely with the child's caseworker to identify needed services for the child and inform the caseworker of any issues or concerns that may arise.

While caseworkers have heavy

caseloads, a CASA volunteer is appointed to just one child or sibling group at a time. This allows the advocate to spend more time with the child and, therefore, better understand the child's family dynamics, needs and what permanency option is in the child's best interest. CASA volunteers are trained to review the case service plan to ensure the services outlined are followed and offered and to help prevent unnecessary delays. CASA volunteers always advocate for the best interests of the child.

The local program is comprised of 78 volunteers, three Advocate Coordinators, an Unassigned Case Manager, and an Executive Director. "The paid staff is here to provide support to our volunteers and cases that do not yet have a volunteer assigned to them," says Mellen-Irle.

The volunteer-based organization relies heavily on community members. CASA offers prospective volunteers four pre-service training courses annually. The organization hosts two annual fundraising events: Night at the Races in April and the CASA Golf Outing in September.

To get involved with Night at the Races as a volunteer, donor or attendee or to learn more about becoming a CASA of Vermilion County Volunteer, visit casavermilion.org, email director@casavermilion.org, call (832)470-7257, or find them on Facebook at "casavermilion."

# Welcome New Members

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- LMR Promotions
  - Visiting Angels Home Care Agency

# Kim Henry: Transforming Lives One Client at a Time

With a ready smile and boundless energy, Transformational Health Coach Kim Henry is making a significant impact in her clients' lives. Henry owns a coaching business and currently partners with four other coaches who have served hundreds of people nationwide.

"I coach individuals through an amazing, physician-led program," says Henry. "This allows them to create lifelong transformation by developing one healthy habit at a time."

Henry's coaching focuses on integrating physical, emotional, and financial habits to create whole health. "Our program is not a diet," she says. "It's designed to educate clients about themselves and equip them to reprogram any thinking or habits that no longer serve them. They become the driving force in the life they want to create!"

She says people may be surprised to learn her services are actually free to clients. She works for a business that pays her to support clients through the company's nutrition plan.

One of her favorite stories of transformation involved a woman who reached out on Facebook for a healthy soup recipe she'd posted. "We met a few years earlier, and I remember thinking she seemed bitter and unhappy, which made me sad" says Henry. "Once she became a client and we defined her physical and emotional goals, we got to work! She began eating small, high protein, low carb and low sugar meals every three hours, drinking more water, balancing her insulin and cortisol levels, and reading her Life Book, an interactive journal. She started seeing results very quickly! It was like her brain fog lifted, and she woke up! She also engaged in our online, healthy community calls. She

realized she didn't have a food and wine problem; deep-rooted family issues robbed her of the peace and happiness she truly desired. She continues to work on managing those emotions today. I was shocked by how much her demeanor completely changed! Through her transformation, she found joy, daily gratitude, and even a second chance at love. It was beautiful to walk alongside her on this journey."

Henry advises that creating long-term health requires a lifestyle change. "I'm proud to meet my clients wherever they are in their current health and take them where they want to go," she adds. "I work with clients looking to reach a healthy weight, those using GLP-1 drugs, battling diabetes, gout and those looking to take their fitness to the next level. I've seen clients get off high blood pressure medication,



lower their BP, become pregnant after infertility issues, and even take their health to the next level by competing in bodybuilding competitions! It's so exciting to watch!"

She has been a Vermilion County resident for over 50 years! She is a wife, mother and "Gimmie" to two granddaughters. She loves to stay active. "Last year, I actually broke my arm skateboarding down our driveway with my granddaughter!" she says with a laugh.

To learn more about her work, search for Kim Henry (Werner) on Facebook. She can also be reached by calling 217-260-4186 or email mrshenry1988@gmail.com. Kim also has a complimentary health assessment you can take to see if this program may be a good fit for you. The link is available on her Facebook profile.



# VermilionAdvantage

# **Community Events to Raise Awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month**

It is hard to imagine more critical messages than the ones during April's Child Abuse Prevention Month. The national campaign has been observed each April since its first presidential proclamation in 1983. Millions of individuals, organizations and communities across the United States plant pinwheels, tie ribbons, organize trainings, host fundraisers, and support many other activities celebrating healthy, happy childhoods and raising awareness that all children deserve to grow up in nurturing safe homes.

Across the state of Illinois and in Vermilion County, the effort to prevent child abuse happens every day. The Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center (VCCAC) and Prevent Child Abuse Illinois (PCA Illinois) are two organizations leading the charge.

The Vermilion County Children's Advocacy Center provides a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and trauma-informed response to the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of child abuse cases in Vermilion County.

VCCAC was founded in 2020 through the work of Vermilion County State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy and the late Sen. Scott Bennett. Sen. Paul Faraci recently joined the board of directors.

The VCCAC serves child victims of abuse and their non-offending caregivers by providing services through a comprehensive, child-focused approach comprehensive, child-focused approach in a safe, neutral environment. By bridging the gap between law enforcement, the Department of Children and Family Services, prosecutors, and service providers during an investigation, VCCAC reduces the number of times a child has to retell their story.

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois (PCA Illinois) is a charitable organization and the chartered state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. The mission of PCA Illinois is to prevent child abuse by providing statewide leadership through education, public awareness, support for community initiatives, and advocacy. Prevent Child Abuse Illinois envisions an Illinois where all children grow in healthy, nurturing homes and communities free of abuse, neglect, violence, or endangerment of any kind.

### **Getting Involved**

Jill Duden, Central Region Prevention Specialist for PCA Illinois, says, "Every month is child abuse prevention month" in her organization's work. She suggests several ways to get involved.

- Attend a free training program.
- Participate in Wear Blue Day on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, to help raise awareness.
- Join the Pinwheels for Prevention initiative. "Pinwheels are the national symbol for child abuse prevention," she says. "Pinwheels represent hope for every child and a call to action. Pinwheels can be ordered through our website, preventchildabuseillinois.org. People

can create their own pinwheel garden at work or home."

- Join the mailing list on the PCA Illinois website.
- Stay educated about child abuse prevention and communicate with your legislators about what's important to you to keep kids safe.

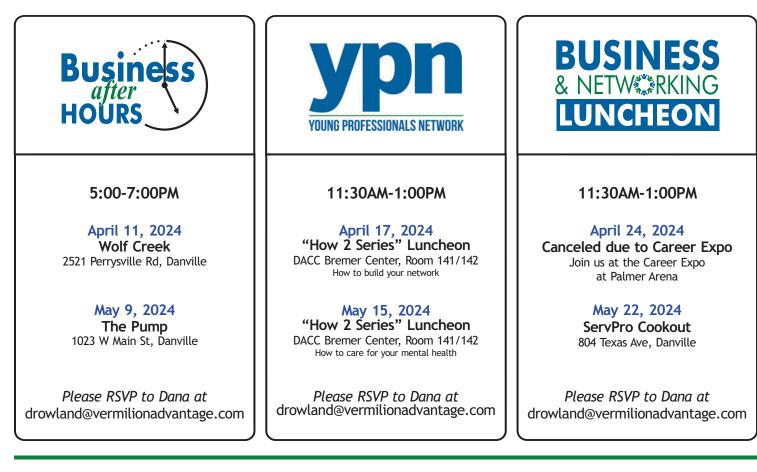
Jonathan Munoz, Executive Director of the Vermilion County Children's Advocacy Center, says another way to get involved is to attend the free training and lunch at the 2nd Annual Child Abuse Awareness Conference on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at Danville Area Community College. This conference is free and open to the public. This collaborative effort will focus on child exploitation and trafficking in the community. National and local leaders will share expertise and insights and discuss strategies and initiatives to combat child abuse.

"We will also participate in the First Friday's event on April 5<sup>th</sup> in downtown Danville," says Munoz. "Seeing the kids grab pinwheels and run around on Vermilion Street is amazing. Senator Faraci will participate with us."

To learn more about VVCAC, visit vcchildadvocacy.org. The organization can also be found on Facebook @Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center. To learn more about Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, visit

preventchildabuseillinois.org. Prevent Child Abuse Illinois







# **DID YOU KNOW...**

Members of Vermilion Advantage with 50 or less employees, can gain health insurance for their business through their Vermilion Advantage membership at a discounted rate?

Contact Dana Rowland for more details! drowland@vermilionadvantage.com



# CRIS Healthy Aging Caregiver Support Program

### Are you providing care for a loved one over age 60? As rewarding as that is, sometimes it can be difficult.

The Caregiver Support program at CRIS can help with support and resources for caregivers of all ages. Call us for more information: (217) 355-1543.

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through USAging as part of a financial assistance award to USAging totaling \$74,999,835 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement by, USAging, ACL/HHS.





# **S ACCOLADES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS**

Don and Deanna Witzel, Owner/Operators of the Witzel Family McDonald's announce Employees, Students & Athletes of the Month



### **DID YOU KNOW...**

Any employee from your business is welcome to attend our Vermilion Advantage networking events? Please share the information with your staff and invite someone new! We look forward to seeing you!

### March Employee of the Month:

Hometown Stars McDonald's	Noriah Poke
Classic Rock-n-Roll	Levi Nolen
Oakwood	Mayci Martin
Georgetown	Dayton Miller
Hoopeston	Ava Taubert
Neighborhood McDonald's	Vanessa Dominguez
Covington, IN	Tanner Hawn

### March Student/Athlete of the Month:

DHS Student of the Month	Curtis Beasley
DHS Athlete of the Month	Phillip Shaw
Schlarman Academy North Student of the Month	Dillon Hemker
Schlarman Academy North Athlete of the Month	Salvador Guerrero
OHS Student of the Month	Addie Lewis
OHS Athlete of the Month	Taylen Wait
GRFHS Student of the Month GRFHS Athlete of the Month	
HAH School Student of the Month HAH School Athlete of the Month	
Covington HS Student of the Month	Zoey Anderson
Covington HS Athlete of the Month	Karma Kingery

# Members of Vermilion Advantage, NFP In Good Standing by Level of Membership

### ADVANTAGE DIAMOND DIRECTOR:

(Level \$10,000+) Aqua Illinois, Inc. City of Danville Danville Sanitary District Fiberteq, LLC First Financial Bank Iroquois Federal Old National Bank OSF HealthCare Sacred Heart Medical Center Vermilion County Government

#### ADVANTAGE GOLD CROWN DIRECTOR: (Level \$6,000 - \$9,999)

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### Members of Vermilion Advantage, NFP (continued)

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