

Relax and de-stress with Family Natural Foods

He's a silly looking guy, with wild eyes and a big grin. When you squeeze him, he reminds you to relax.

He was a giveaway for customers who bought a stress-buster supplement at Family Natural Foods. Katrina Hittner, co-owner of the local health food store with her brother, Stephen, thought they were funny-looking toys, but customers seemed to like them. And they provided another benefit: They make you laugh.

“Stress happens to us all,” Hittner told participants at the February Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group meeting. “It's healthy to a certain level. ... It can get us going, but negative stress can increase levels of cortisol.” Cortisol is a stress hormone that in high and prolonged levels can have negative effects, including high blood pressure, lower immunity and impaired cognitive performance.

It's important for people to understand what triggers stress and what they first feel when stress rises so they can take action to reduce it, Hittner said. “What can tell us to calm down, relax?” she asked. “What can create more happiness and laughter in our lives?”

Family Natural Foods offers products aimed at reducing stress. Some are single herbs, like passion flower or ashwagandha, while others are blends, featuring “adaptogens,” like ginseng. Adaptogens support your body by adapting to your needs -- If you need energy, they increase your energy; if you need to relax, they help calm you down. Ginseng can help keep you centered and focused, Hittner said.

Yoga and breathing techniques can help you relax. Hittner showed us an easy breathing technique called the “bumblebee” breath that can aid relaxation.

Energy supplements and exercise can give you energy. Getting enough sleep and drinking enough water also are



The wellness wheel, left, can help you determine if all areas of your life are in balance. Stress ReLeaf herbal supplements included the Relax Talking Stress Reliever, below.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call Family Natural Foods at 715-423-3120 or visit 910 W. Grand Ave., Wisconsin Rapids.



important for keeping your energy up.

Hittner shared a wellness wheel illustration, showing all the parts of our lives. “If one (area) is out of balance, our wheel is going to be a little bit off,” she said. The wheel can be a way to evaluate areas where you could focus to improve your overall wellness.

“Take care of yourself – your needs – to care for your loved one,” Hittner said while also reminding participants to have fun and laugh. “We need to have more fun ... It's a heavy, heavy world. Take time for more fun.”

Employee spotlight

Sherri Spranger has been a caregiver – on and off – since she was 18 years old.

“It’s something that I really enjoy – taking care of people,” she said, “making their lives as good as they can be.”

Spranger has been a resident aide with Hilltop for about five years. She applied after a co-worker told her about a position at Hilltop.



Her favorite part of the job is interacting with the residents and doing activities.

Spranger is inspired by her mom. “She’s always believed in me, no matter what. She made me want to live a better life.”

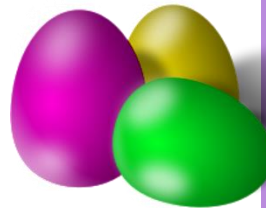
While she does own a TV set, she doesn’t watch it. A few years ago, she dropped cable to save money, and it turned into a lifestyle choice. Instead, Spranger prefers to crack a book. “I like to read a lot.”

Spranger never has been married, but she doesn’t count it out. She said she still might meet someone she wants to marry. Until then, she keeps company with two cats – Boo Kitty and Ski – and her dog, Zoe.

New employees

We welcome these new employees:

- Elizabeth Urban, Hilltop of Pepper
- Connie Van Gheem, Hilltop Estate
- Jessica Coman, Hilltop Alpine Terrace
- Jessica Bruce, Hilltop of Pepper



Easter trivia

Easter baskets originally closely resembled nests – filled with eggs.

The White House egg rolling tradition began in 1878. Now the event features an egg hunt for children.

Easter eggs are painted or dyed to represent the bright sunlight and colors of spring.

Alzheimer’s caregiver support group

Tasha Beestman of the Alzheimer’s Association will offer a session on Effective Communication Strategies on March 10 at the Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group. Mike Sullivan of Thrivent Financial will discuss long-term care insurance on April 14. We meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Aging & Disability Resource Center in Centralia Center. Join us for a time of sharing. Call 715-423-7400 for information or to arrange free respite care for your loved one so you can attend the meeting.

Register for Alzheimer’s event

The 30th annual Wisconsin Network Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias will be May 1 to 3 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. It’s an excellent chance to learn about the disease, caregiving, research and more. You can register online at www.alzwi.org. The Kalahari offers special room rates during the conference if you reserve by April 16.



We made maple syrup candy with fresh snow, clockwise from top left, St. Patrick's puffed paint door decos, heart wreaths for Valentine's and home-made play dough; painted a bird house; and visited with kittens for pet therapy. Watch our activity videos at <http://tinyurl.com/hilltopactivities>



Take a look inside Hilltop Grand Village

We did a walk through recently to see work inside Hilltop Grand Village, Hilltop's resort-style living facility under construction north of Home Depot on Highway 54.

Apartments are being framed in the south wing, where floors are poured. Walls are being set on the north wing. You can watch a video and see photos on our Facebook page. Follow our progress at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HilltopGrandVillage>



A singing valentine

Residents at Hilltop of Pepper enjoyed a special Valentine's Day treat when Assumption Catholic High School students delivered a singing valentine. Lois Altmann won the auction item at a school fundraiser and chose to have it delivered to her mom, Lucille. You can watch a video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj14iOssv-s>

Volunteer nomination

Since July, Pastor Milt Van Natta, his wife, Kay, and his mom, Gail, from Baker Street Community Church in Wisconsin Rapids, have provided church services at Hilltop of Pepper and Hilltop Alpine Terrace.

They visit weekly, offering a brief message, song service and prayer. The residents enjoy this chance to worship together and join in singing familiar hymns.

We are grateful to the Van Nattas for their volunteer service at Hilltop.



PASTOR MILT VAN NATTA, LEFT, AND HIS MOM, GAIL, LEAD A CHURCH SERVICE AT HILLTOP OF PEPPER.

They were nominated by Hilltop to be recognized at the annual Volunteer Breakfast through the United Way of Inner Wisconsin's Volunteer Center. They will be recognized during the event March 31.



Happy birthday!

We celebrate birthdays each month with a cake and party at our facilities.

- Wava, March 22

