

## Alumni Homecoming 2017



Ron Peno with classmate Anita Larrington

What a terrific alumni turnout! What an awesome homecoming for CHS! Lots of class reunions and a top-notch parade float of 24 of our former homecoming queens. Danielle Nelson won the jar of M&M's and many folks won a free Cool Cat cup with a bags game. Thanks to Debbie Kain and Donna Wilhoit for decorating the float, to Mike Reynolds for the use of his hayrack and pulling the float, to Brian Brown and Julie Hogue Kruse for their help working the alumni table and conducting tours of the building, to Nancy Cumberland and Kitty Pezzetti for helping with the tear down of the float, and, of course, to the queens for taking time to attend, and the class reunion leaders who organized the reunions. Congrats to CHS alum Ron Peno for serving as the parade marshal! Every reunion ends with "why do we wait five years to get together?" See you next year!



CHS Homecoming Queens. Front row: Lauren Lee and Laci Cooper. 2nd row: Paige Woodruff Smothers, Nikki Niday, Emily Flaws Serrano, Taylor Kooker, Meghan Manring Papke, Pochie Tilton Bartholomew. 3rd row: Mary Salmon Sones, Nikki Norris Blanchard, Kitty Rothfus Pezzetti, Kelly Kness, Lori Lee Curtis, Ellen Christensen Hammond, Cindy Thompson Zimmerline. Back row: Anita Koethe Larrington, Sue Randleman Robinson, Nancy Shoop Cumberland, Vickie Futrelle Till, Mollie Bolinger Zigelnik, Deb Brehse Smalley, Jessica Yanske Klages. Not pictured: Shianne Gruss Fisher.



## Sign Up to Host a "Trunk" at PumpkinFest

By Barbara Rasko

Decorate your vehicle, set up a fun game, hand out candy to the kids, and have some Halloween fun during PumpkinFest on Saturday, October 21st from 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Trunk or Treat is a lot of fun for kids who participate in PumpkinFest. Great Western Bank is again sponsoring Trunk or Treat in their parking lot at 100 N. 1st Street. They are inviting local residents and businesses to provide children with a fun and safe way to celebrate Halloween.

Trunk or Treat participants are invited to decorate the trunk of their car or the bed of their truck with a fun, silly, or scary theme. Dress in costume, be creative, and have Halloween fun surprising children and adults with themes such as pumpkins, scarecrows, ghosts and ghouls, children's movies, sports teams, Christmas in October, or something from your childhood past. Last year over 400 kids walked by the displays and

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## Senior Retreat Day

Senior Retreat Day, sponsored by Seniors on the Move, will be held on October 10th from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Sheraton Hotel, 1800 50th Street, West Des Moines. This day is designed to help area residents age 55+ learn how to incorporate healthy changes into their lifestyle.

"People want to live long, healthy lives. That's a fact," says Kim Colby, Managing Director of Seniors on the Move. "We are really excited about this premiere event. We've planned a day full of education and activities to focus on improving your health and longevity."

The conference includes a hot, plated lunch, health and hearing screenings, free gifts, and prizes. Special guest, Ed Podolak, Kansas City Chiefs Hall of Famer and Hawkeye Football Legend, will be also on hand to sign autographs in the exhibit hall.

"You'll have the opportunity to socialize and meet new friends all while learning more about how to become the healthiest version of YOU," says Colby.

What you'll learn and experience:

- How to live to 100 with health and vitality

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## Northwestern University Conducting Research with Iowans

Researchers at Northwestern University are conducting important research with Iowans to understand the causes of autism. Dr. Molly Losh and her research team welcome families affected by autism to learn more about their research. They are working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder (including individuals previously diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome or PDD-NOS), as well as their parents and grandparents, on federally-funded research that focuses on identifying subtle traits among family members of individuals with autism that may provide clues into the genes implicated in autism.

Why Iowa? Their work looks at multi-generational predictors of autism by including great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, and individuals with autism. In their research studying parents and children, they found evidence that subtle profiles of childhood academic performance in parents, based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), predicted features of autism in their children. This result suggests that different learning patterns during childhood, in people who do not themselves have autism, and who did not show any impairments or delays themselves, are linked to the genes involved in autism. This is meaningful to the study of autism in showing how traits related to autism are genetically based and exist in all of us. In new grants from the National Institutes of Health, they are building on this work to include other family members across generations who went to school in Iowa. The state of Iowa is truly unique because it is the only state that has archived these standardized testing records, which is why the research team is very invested in working with Iowans! They believe this study can help us to better understand how personality, language, and cognitive profiles run in families of people with and without autism, and which may also relate to unique abilities and their genetic basis.

Participation in this research is open to anyone with a relative with autism (or autism spectrum condition, such as Asperger's syndrome), or anyone with these conditions themselves. Being a part of the study includes tasks involving telling a story while seeing pictures on a screen, looking at pictures, solving puzzles, completing measures of brain activity, and talking about your friendships and the ways that you relate to other people. Participation also includes completing questionnaires about you and your child's behaviors, mood, and personality style, as well as providing a blood sample. Participation includes either one or two visits and participants will be compensated for their time.

Fragile X syndrome is another major focus of the Northwestern team's research. Fragile X syndrome is caused by a mutation of the FMR1 gene and is the most common inherited cause of intellectual disability. It is also the most common known genetic cause of autism, as most individuals with fragile X also meet criteria for autism, or at least show some symptoms. Given that the FMR1 genetic mutation was only discovered in 1991, much remains to be learned about the specific characteristics of individuals with fragile X syndrome and their family members who carry the gene.

The lab is studying the role that the fragile X gene, FMR1, plays in language and cognitive development more broadly through studies of individuals who carry the FMR1 gene in its pre-mutation state. Some important new findings from the lab's studies of fragile X syndrome and the FMR1 pre-mutation are showing links between this gene and specific patterns of language and social behavior. And following on their work in autism with Iowans who took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the researchers are currently exploring how parents' childhood academic performance on the ITBS is related to personality, language, and social features in adulthood, as well as how parent's childhood academic development might predict their own children's symptoms of fragile X syndrome and reflect genetic contributions that can be traced across generations. This work is helping to uncover how this specific gene may interact with other genetic influences to contribute to complex traits in all of us, as well as help to explain links to developmental delays in individuals with fragile X and autism.

Please contact the Northwestern team if you are interested in learning more! They are currently recruiting individuals with autism and their parents and grandparents. The research team also has Iowa-focused studies of fragile X syndrome and are actively recruiting families of individuals with fragile X.

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