

SWINGING INTO SPRING

The Tigers boys tennis team
is reloaded for a new year / A6

GOLFING GOALS

The girls golf team is back with
big goals for the conference / A6

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Kicking up funds

Wade and Tammy Rolf of Hutchinson are kicking up their heels Saturday at Dancing Like the Stars

BY KAY JOHNSON
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The sky's the limit when it comes to fundraising. Shaving your head, selling roses or serving walking tacos are all ways local groups raise money for their missions.

Last year, 2B Continued, a nonprofit focused on suicide prevention and mental health awareness, launched a first in local fundraising — Dancing Like the Stars. It's a take off on the popular TV show "Dancing with the Stars."

Director and founder Tammy Diehn recruited 12 couples from McLeod, Carver and Sibley counties to showcase their talents in choreographed dance routines in a live, big-time production at the Glencoe Event Center. COVID-19 intervened, so things didn't work out exactly as planned, but the upside was it raised \$57,956.94. It's not surprising with a payday like that, the event has returned in-person at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at the Glencoe Event Center. This year's fundraising goal is \$85,000.

Following in the footsteps of previous dancing couple Dean and Carol Nissen is Wade and Tammy Rolf of Hutchinson. Nowhere in their backgrounds does it say ballroom dancers. Wade is owner of All Mighty Movers in Hutchinson and a longtime employee at Yetzer Home Store in Waconia. Tammy is a real estate agent and founder of Daughters with Purpose, a nonprofit that raises money to help others. The couple has two children, a son-in-law and two grandchildren.

Although they may not cha-cha-cha on a daily basis, it didn't interfere with their desire to step up and be part of this event.

"We are having a blast learning how to dance," Tammy said. "It has been a challenge because neither of us have any dance background. I take that back, we learned the polka and waltz for our wedding dance 32 years ago."

MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHER

To fine-tune their moves, Wade and Tammy are working with choreographer Kelly Bestul of Kelly's Dance Academy in Hutchinson.

This is the second year Bestul has worked with Dancing Like the Stars. In addition to Team Rolf, she is instructing Matt and Jocelyn Buckentin of Brownton.

"The mission of 2B Continued is one that



SUBMITTED PHOTO

It's a selfie with Wade Rolf, Tammy Rolf and their dance instructor Kelly Bestul of Kelly's Dance Academy. Bestul is helping Team Rolf learn some new moves as they prepare for Dancing Like the Stars, a fundraising event this weekend for 2B Continued.

touches me personally," Bestul said. "When I first volunteered in 2019, it was about being part of something to help families dealing with the ramifications of suicide, but also bringing awareness of how it can get to that point for someone. Last year, a few weeks after its inaugural performance, I personally lost my 24-year-old son to suicide.

"I feel even more compelled to be part of this now, as difficult as it is for me personally, because I know first hand the challenges of it all and what type of resources are needed to

heal not just me, but my children, my family and all the relationships he left behind."

Bestul sees the dancers she's working with as caring people who are willing to challenge their abilities, their nerves and contribute to the greater good of society.

"Unfortunately, the past few years have taken a toll not only on our health, but our mental well-being, so this is even more important," she said.

Dancing to A2 >



SUBMITTED PHOTO

McLeod Emergency Food Shelf volunteer Sharon Crittenden stocks the produce cooler after a food rescue delivery.

Giving back with time and money

Local volunteer groups
are still feeling the
effects of the pandemic

BY JEREMY JONES
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If you're looking for something to do this summer, it may be worth checking in with your favorite local volunteer group.

It takes all kinds to keep a community lively, but after two years of uncertainty, many have had their usual plans disrupted in one way or another. Some are seeking volunteers to build back up to full strength, while others are looking to make up for lost funds. In certain cases, higher demand for service has come more recently.

The McLeod Emergency Food Shelf, for instance, has had many individuals step up at its locations in Hutchinson (498 State Highway 7 E.) and Glencoe (719 13th St. E.). And at the height of COVID, though donations slowed from groups or organizations that stopped meeting in person, locals gave generously.

"People received stimulus money and didn't need it and passed it on," said Lennie Albers, the food shelf's executive director.

But now, in the middle of the Minnesota Food-Share March Campaign (which runs through

Volunteers to A6 >

School picks Deitte for new superintendent

Contract could be approved
as soon as April 11

BY JEREMY JONES
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After a monthslong search, Hutchinson Public Schools has offered its superintendent position to Dan Deitte.

Deitte has served as superintendent of Minneota Public Schools for 14 years and as part-time superintendent of Ivanhoe Public Schools. He was told Wednesday he had been selected by the district after a visit on Monday, and he said he was interested.

"Now we have to agree on the contract," said Tiffany Barnard, chair of the Hutchinson School Board. "That process will hopefully be worked through next week so I can present it to the board at our April 11 board meeting."



**Dan
Deitte**

The school originally reviewed a slate of five candidates and narrowed it down to two. Those final two candidates were invited to each spend a day visiting and touring the district. Deitte visited Monday and the other finalist — Chris Swenson, superintendent of Holdingford Public Schools — visited Tuesday.

Deitte was given a tour of the district and its manufacturing partners by current Superintendent Daron VanderHeiden before having lunch with principals and directors. He then met with middle school and high school students during building visits, met with community leaders who help the school administer its TigerPath Academics program

Deitte to A2 >

Next COVID spike likely small

New omicron variant is
now dominant strain
in Minnesota, U.S.

BY CHRISTOPHER MAGAN
St. Paul Pioneer Press

Minnesota could see another uptick in COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks, thanks to the latest version of the omicron variant, but any increases are not expected to be as serious as previous coronavirus surges.

"Whether it ends up being a larger increase in cases or a smaller one still remains to be seen," Dr. John O'Horo, a Mayo Clinic infectious disease specialist, said during a March 31 news briefing. "It certainly doesn't look like it is going to be anything on the order of what we have seen with prior spikes."

The omicron BA.2 variant, which is related to the original omicron strain that drove infections in Minnesota to unprecedented levels in January, is now believed to be the dominant variant in the U.S. and across the globe.

Twin Cities wastewater data from the Metro-

politan Council shows omicron BA.2 accounted for about 60% of coronavirus genetic material found in sewage last week. The original omicron strain accounts for much of the rest.

The BA.2 variant has more genetic mutations than its predecessor and is believed to be more easily transmitted than other versions of the coronavirus, said Matthew Binnicker, director of Mayo Clinic's Clinical Virology Laboratory in Rochester. But prior immunity from recent infection with omicron as well as the protection provided by vaccines should help keep cases at a manageable level.

"We will see increasing cases in many parts of the United States, but it is not thought to result in a surge like we experienced in January and early February of this year," Binnicker said.

Omicron BA.2 has shown the ability to infect people who are fully vaccinated and boosted, but vaccines continue to protect against severe illness. About 66% of Minnesotans are vaccinated and more than 2 million have gotten booster shots.

Antivirals like Pfizer's drug Paxlovid also

COVID to A2 >



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