



FRIENDSHIP

“A good friend is a connection to life - a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity in a totally insane world.” – Lois Wyse

“When the world is so complicated, the simple gift of friendship is within all of our hands.” – Maria Shriver

Diane Middlebrooks
Women's Initiative Coordinator

Recently I had lunch with my sister and our two friends from grammar school. Our mothers were friends also. We followed their example of keeping in touch. Over the years we talked on the phone, took turns having lunch at each other's homes or meeting at a restaurant. We double-dated with various boyfriends and husbands, going to concerts and plays.

During the pandemic we couldn't meet in person. When finally, it was safe to meet in person, we emailed back and forth on dates and places. We wound up going to a restaurant in a neighborhood in Chicago. We talked and laughed non-stop. As we were walking back to our cars, still talking, a young woman crossed in front of us. She smiled at us and said, "you must be good friends". Seeing our friendship in action made her happy.

I subscribe to the Mayo Clinic Newsletter and the title of a recent newsletter was *Friendships: Enrich your life and improve your health*. It included the benefits of friendship, such as increasing your sense of belonging and purpose and boosting your happiness and reducing your stress. And helping cope with traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss or the death of a loved one.

We often think we don't have time for friends. We are working or taking care of family, or grandchildren. Or we hesitate since we are not sure how to ask a friend to meet for coffee or lunch. Just email or telephone with a suggested date, time and place. The benefits are many!

What's Inside This Issue

Who You Are, Who We Are2

Financial Wellness.....3

Scams and How to Avoid Falling for Them3

Did You Know?.....4

WHO YOU ARE, WHO WE ARE...

Who you Are – Vicki Scharringhausen

Tell us about yourself

I am the owner of Freedom Fastener Inc. Our company focuses on serving small to medium sized OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer) for all their fastener needs. We specialize in providing a wide range of fastening solutions for a wide variety of industries. With a focus on customer service, reliability, and precision, we pride ourselves on exceeding expectations. Whether standard fasteners or custom solutions, our experienced team is committed to providing personal service and timely delivery to keep projects running smoothly.

What have you gained by being a Women's Initiative member?

As a member of the Women's Initiative, I've gained a deeper understanding of how different businesses operate. Through our discussions and networking events, I've had the opportunity to learn about various industries, business models, and strategies employed by companies of all sizes. Engaging with women from diverse backgrounds has allowed me to see firsthand the challenges and opportunities that businesses face in today's unpredictable

market. After every meeting, I always leave feeling uplifted and motivated. The positive energy, insightful discussions, and collaborative atmosphere never fail to leave me feeling inspired and empowered. This exposure has not only broadened my perspective but has also equipped me with valuable insights and best practices that I can apply in my own work.

Why are you glad to be a customer of Itasca Bank?

I'm a very happy customer of Itasca Bank for several reasons. The personalized support and assistance we receive from the bank's management and customer service team is outstanding. They are always ready to address any questions or concerns we may have. I appreciate having local branches that provide access to in-person assistance and the convenience and accessibility of the online and mobile banking platforms. As a customer, I feel confident knowing that my funds are secure and protected by the bank's security measures. Overall, doing business with Itasca Bank has been a positive and rewarding experience that has helped me achieve my financial goals with peace of mind.

Who We Are – Eileen Skalski

Tell us about yourself

I am a life-long resident of Illinois, born in Chicago, grew up in the south suburbs, and moved to Itasca 30 years ago when I got married. I have two daughters, Riley, 25 (Riley is a receptionist at the Roselle branch) and Payton, 22. I graduated from Columbia College in Chicago with a degree in Advertising. I worked at a community bank as a teller while attending college, and I vowed that I would NEVER work in a bank again! While searching for a full-time job after graduating, I did some temp work at the Chicago Tribune, as an administrative assistant in the Features department working for George Lazarus, the marketing and advertising columnist. I grew up reading columnists Bob Greene and Rick Kogan and now I was working with them! I loved that job, but I did not want to continue as a temporary employee. I had a 13-year career in account management at various ad agencies in Chicago, and after a short time at home with my daughters, I began working at Itasca Bank. I will be celebrating my 20th anniversary in June. I've learned to never say never, ever again!

What do you like best about your job?

I have three things: the people, the opportunities, the

communities. I was a customer of the Bank when I decided I would like to work there. Working in the marketing department has been a dream come true. The people I have the pleasure of working with are so wonderful. I really enjoy the opportunities of collaborating on new products and services, and seeing it come to life through the marketing and the positive effect it has on our customers. The Women's Initiative has been invaluable to me as an employee and as a woman. I enjoy helping to plan the programs, meeting the members, and learning so much from all our wonderful speakers! I see the positive impact that Itasca Bank has on our local communities, and I am fortunate to participate in the initiatives and work for such a community-focused bank.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

About a two years ago I became a certified hospice volunteer after completing an eight-week course. I have volunteered at the Ark in Resurrection Hospital (Ascension) in Chicago, and the hospice residence at Ascension Alexian Brothers in Elk Grove Village. I am now focusing my efforts to in-home hospice care. Other passions that keep me grounded are yoga, meditation, reading biographies, traveling, and spending time with my family and friends.

SCAMS AND HOW TO AVOID FALLING FOR THEM

Our recent program, presented by Deb Reiter, CMIT Solutions, gave some valuable tips about scams and how to avoid falling for them. Since scammers and hackers have become more sophisticated, learning about scams and financial fraud is a continuous learning requirement for everyone. The more you know, the better equipped you will be to defend yourself from cyber attackers and fraud schemes. Here are a few of her tips:

- You are the most important defense in fighting and recognizing a scam!
- Scammers bypass your intellect and rely on psychological and emotional manipulation.

From an AARP Study -*What Makes Us Susceptible to Scams*:

- People are especially vulnerable to scammers when they're experiencing cognitive overload — that is, too much information from the internet or other media, which causes them to become distracted.
- Stress increases scam susceptibility, creating “vulnerable moments” that can turn fraud targets into victims.

- Strong emotions increase fraud susceptibility. Not only do victims report significantly more and stronger emotions at the time of fraud encounters, but significantly more victims report feeling out of control during these encounters, which is precisely the goal of the scammer.

THE GOOD NEWS: People forearmed with information about a particular con are far less likely to engage with a scammer plying it, or to lose money if they do engage.

The Psychology of a Scammer:

Scammers are highly skilled in manipulation techniques. They exploit emotions, instill fear or urgency, and employ persuasive tactics to deceive their victims. They often create a sense of urgency to pressure individuals into making impulsive decisions.

Stop by either Itasca Bank & Trust Co. location to pick up a key fob to remind you to Stop, Think, and Listen before you react to a scam.



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Financial wellness is a state of financial well-being in which you can comfortably manage your bills and expenses.

A recent survey revealed that spending time with family and friends and growing finances are the two most important priorities for Americans right now. Regardless of age or status, the right financial decisions can significantly change the course of a person's life, affecting their ability to save for a home, finance their education or contribute to an emergency fund. The research also found that 62 percent of Americans believe work-life balance is more important than a high salary. This demonstrates that today's consumers believe achieving financial wellness should not be contingent on a huge paycheck.

To achieve financial wellness, decide what your goals are:

- Supporting family (children, parents, siblings)
- Adding to retirement savings
- Understanding investments
- Building an emergency fund
- Paying off credit card debt.

- Sticking to a budget
- Understanding small business financials
- Saving for college degree; advanced degree
- Saving for children's education

Itasca Bank has simple ways to start reaching your savings goals with an account that is right for you. Choose from Itasca Bank's value-added list of premium services to create an account that's right for you.

- Itasca Savings Account
- Certificate of Deposit
- Youth Savings
- Individual Retirement Account
- Christmas Club

Details can be found at itascabank.com. For information contact Itasca Bank & Trust Co.'s Relationship Bankers at 630-773-0350.

Together we'll shape the future

DID YOU KNOW?

Itasca Bank & Trust Co. has an automated account switching solution that makes it easy for you to quickly and securely switch your recurring direct deposits and automatic payments from your previous financial institution.

Consolidate your finances by switching your direct deposits and automatic payments to an Itasca Bank & Trust Co. checking or savings account.

Do you receive any of these type of payments from a company?

- Employee payroll
- Investment income
- Retirement/pension income

With our automated direct deposit switching, you can be sure you're getting paid how you want, when you want, where you want. No more waiting on employers or paper forms. We can take care of everything.

Switch your recurring payments quickly and securely to your Itasca Bank & Trust Co. checking account or savings account.

- Utility payments
- Mortgage or rent payment
- Auto loan or lease payment
- Department store cards
- Cell phone payment

ClickSWITCH removes the hassle of contacting all of your billers and depositors to inform them of your new account information. You input your payment and direct deposit information to our secure ClickSWITCH system, submit the switch and the system does the rest. You can monitor the progress of your switches by clicking on the "View Existing Switches" on the home screen of your Dashboard in online banking. ClickSWITCH is secure – it uses the latest in online encryption protection to gather and store your switch information. Additionally, Itasca Bank & Trust Co. adheres to the highest industry standards with regard to the security of your personal information. **Contact Itasca Bank & Trust Co. Customer Service (630-773-0350) or come to the Bank and meet with a Banker to get started on ClickSWITCH.**