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Volume 51, No. 49

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## Avery's bravery saves her dad's life

By AMANDA RASINSKI  
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With a gaping wound on her leg and a broken arm, 5-year-old Avery Amstutz called 911 and even walked up a hill to flag down a first responder in order to save her dad's life.

"I was calm when I called," Avery said.

For her acts of bravery, Avery not only received an award from Sheriff Shawn Larsen and her elementary school, but was also granted the Life Saving Award by the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association (MSA) in December 2019.

On Sept. 22, 2019, Avery and her father, Andrew, were in an ATV accident in Cushing Township. Avery called 911, as her father was unconscious.

"Morrison County Dispatcher Amanda DeZurik took the call and she remained calm as she spoke with Avery to try to determine exactly what happened, what the injuries were and more importantly, where they were at," Sheriff Larsen wrote in nominating DeZurik and Avery for the MSA 2019 Life Saving Award.

Larsen wrote that the dis-  
(Continued on Page 3A)



(020920AveryAmstutz)

Staff photo by Amanda Rasinski

Avery Amstutz, a kindergartner at Dr. S.G. Knight Elementary School in Randall, was honored with three awards from the sheriff, her school and the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association for her bravery in calling 911 after an ATV accident with her father.

## Issues to consider before fostering or adopting

By SHEILA MCCOY  
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This is the third and final article in a series on foster care and adoption.

Currently, there are 50 foster care providers in Morrison County and with the increase of children in need of services, more are needed. But there is a lot to think about before making the commitment to foster or adopt a child, said Morrison County Social Services Supervisor Melanie Erickson.

"To go from just being in the community to adopting or just even going into foster care is a very big step and a lot of people are not prepared for how challenging that can be," she said.

Erickson said sometimes people go into providing foster care with the mindset that all the children need is love and that love heals everything.

While love and acceptance are important, Erickson said it is essential for people to understand that healing cannot be rushed and

doesn't happen overnight. Healing occurs over a long period of time as trust and a solid routine are established. The kind of trauma and the impact it had on the child can also determine whether they heal at all.

In addition, a child may suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome or other exposure to drugs that affect their development and response.

New foster parents may be discouraged when they don't see a positive change fairly early and take it personally.

"There is a lot to overcome, so sometimes our foster parents feel that when they are unable to change a certain behavior right away that it is a reflection on them and that they are not doing a good enough job," she said. "We have had foster care parents ask kids to leave their home because they feel they are not able to make a deep enough impact on the behavior."

(Continued on Page 2A)

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ing the special moments in your life and the experiences that help identify the community and make it unique. We love that, which is why we work hard to bring readers local news and information every single week.

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We appreciate your support and thanks for being one of our valued readers.

— Sincerely, Mark Weber,  
APG of East Central  
Minnesota president



Photo courtesy of Stanley Musielewicz

### A nap makes every day a good day

Daytime is nap time for the northern saw-whet owl. Stanley Musielewicz of Little Falls sent in this photo taken within the last couple of weeks in northern Morrison County. He said saw-whet owls are also known for remaining perfectly still to avoid detection. They are year-round residents of this part of Minnesota, and feed on mice, small birds and insects in summer. It is one of the smallest owl species.



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### Index

Auctions.....6F	Crossword/Sudoku .....2B	Events.....2A	Recipes .....2F	Sports .....12A
Business.....8A	Education.....2B	Obituaries.....8B	Religion.....7B	Viewpoint.....6A
Courts/Crime.....16A	Entertainment.....6B	Public Notices .....10B	Society/Arts.....5B	West Words .....6A



# What's happening this week ...

## Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020

- Sunny Zwilling Memorial ICE Fest, Green Prairie Fish Lake, 12636 Forest Road, Little Falls, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Family afternoon of skiing and snowshoeing, Pierz Park and Golf Course, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- Free gospel and bluegrass concert featuring Kingery Family, Pierz Healy High Performing Arts Center, 5:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call (320) 632-1875 for information.
- Hotline for AA meetings, 24-hour assistance, (320) 202-1895.

## Monday, Feb. 10, 2020

- Employment Enterprises Inc. Board meeting, 307 Ninth Ave. NW, Little Falls, 5:30 p.m.
- AA and Al-Anon meetings, Motley United Methodist Church, 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- AA and Al-Anon meetings and prayer service, St. Michael's Catholic Church, Motley, 7 p.m.
- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call (320) 632-1875 for information.
- Separated/Divorced Support Group, Caritas Family Services, St. Cloud, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- Bone Builders class, Little Falls Senior Center, 9:30 a.m.
- RSVP Bone Builders class, Pierz Villa, 1 p.m.
- Courage to Change AA group, First United Church, Little Falls, 7:30 p.m.
- Disordered Eating Support Group, St. Gabriel's Hospital, Little Falls, 6 p.m.
- The Morrison County Salvation Army Board, historic courtroom, second floor, Historic Courthouse, Little Falls, 9:30 a.m.

## Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020

- Nitrogen Smart Workshop by U of M Extension, Cass Gilbert Depot, Little Falls, 9 a.m.
- Central Lakes College Music Department's winter concert, Chalberg Theatre, CLC Brainerd campus, 7:30 p.m.
- Al-Anon meetings, Shepherd of the Pines Church, Rice, 6 p.m.
- Al-Anon meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue, NW, Little Falls, noon to 1 p.m.
- Take Off Pounds Sensibly, (TOPS #0307), Bethel Lutheran Church, Little Falls, 5:30 p.m.
- Communal Prayer for Vocations, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, 12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m.
- Gamblers Anonymous meeting, Onamia, call (320) 532-5067 or (320) 630-2416.
- AA Big Book meeting, Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue, Little Falls, 8 p.m.
- Absolute Narcotics Anonymous, The First Presbyterian Church, 373 Fourth Ave., St. Cloud, 7:30 p.m.
- Morrison County Food Shelf, 912 First Ave. SW, Little Falls, open 10 a.m. - noon.
- Suicide Loss Support Group, Catholic Charities Center for Life Transitions, Sauk Rapids, 7 p.m., (320) 529-0427.

## Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020

- Secular Franciscans meet, St. Otto's Center, Little Falls, 5 p.m.
- Food distribution, Bethany Lutheran Church, Ramey, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
- Mass with "Anointing of the Sick," Holy Trinity Church, Royalton, 3:15 p.m.
- 55-plus driver discount four-hour refresher program, Initiative Foundation, 405 First St. SE, Little Falls, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Community coffee, Little Falls Care Center, 1200 First Ave. NE, Little Falls, signs to room will be posted, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- Bone Builders class, Little Falls Senior Center, 9:30 a.m.
- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call (320) 632-1875 for information.
- Serenity Seekers, AA meeting, Motley Free Methodist Church, behind Dave Doll's, noon.
- Adult Bible Study, Assembly of God Church, Little Falls, 7 p.m.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) support group, Our Place, 606 Front St., Brainerd, 7:30 p.m.
- Circle of Parents, Little Falls TCC Site, 501 LeMieur St., 4:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Women in Recovery, United Free Methodist Church, Motley, noon. Call (218) 575-2611 for more information.
- Morrison County Food Shelf, 912 First Ave. SW, Little Falls, open 10 a.m. - noon.
- Emotions Anonymous Support Group, John Paul II Center, behind Our Lady of Lourdes Church in west Little Falls, 9:30 a.m. For information, call (320) 630-2697.
- Open AA meeting, Drop In Center, 120 Bdwy. E., Little Falls, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Call (320) 632-7817.
- "Between the Covers" book group meeting, Upsala Public Library, 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- American Legion meeting #341, City Hall in Pierz, 8 p.m.
- Support for a Better You, Drop In Center, 120 Bdwy. E., Little Falls, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

## Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020

- Valentine's Day Party, Little Falls Senior Center, music at 2:30 p.m., meal at 5 p.m.
- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call (320) 632-1875 for information.
- Al-Anon meeting, St. Gabriel's Hospital, Healy Room, 815 Second St. SE, Little Falls, 7 p.m.
- Taking Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS #1679) meeting, Rose Room, St. Gabriel's Hospital, Little Falls, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
- Share-A-Meal, First Lutheran Church, Little Falls, 6 p.m.
- RSVP Bone Builders class, Pierz Villa, 1 p.m.
- A 12-step recovery group for criminals and gang members, Royal Cafe, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Morrison County Food Shelf, 912 First Ave. SW, Little Falls, open 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Celebrate Recovery, Living Hope Church, 17389 Haven Road, Little Falls. Fellowship begins at 6 p.m., meetings at 6:30 p.m.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI-MN), meets at Our Place, 606 Front St., Brainerd, 7 p.m.

## Friday, Feb. 14, 2020

- Happy Valentine's Day!
- Tae Guk Kwan Do, from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. at Independent Lifestyles Inc., 215 N. Benton Dr., Sauk Rapids, (320) 267-7717.
- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call for more information.

## Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020

- AA meeting at Fifth Street and Fifth Avenue Northwest, Little Falls, 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Call (320) 632-1875 for more information.

# Royalton Council asked to reconsider scope of Cedar/Driftwood street projects

By LIZ VERLEY  
Correspondent

Forty-six property owners who will be affected by the proposed Cedar/Driftwood streets project in Royalton signed a petition urging the Council to reconsider the curb, gutter, drain tile and additional portion of the project.

The petition states, "We feel it adds unwarranted expense to a project that is already a financial burden to the property owners affected and the price will far exceed the market value increase to the property."

The petition was presented to the Council Tuesday, by resident Mary Gutzkow, who said, "We strongly encourage you as a Council to consider our concerns as you discuss this project in

your planning meetings." Gutzkow said she had been in contact with Attorney Kevin Toskey from the League of Minnesota Cities who sent her information on special assessments and the legal requirements that must be met.

Information provided by Toskey, according to Gutzkow, includes that the land receives a special benefit from the improvement; the assessment does not exceed the special benefit measured by the increase in market value due to the improvements; and the assessment is uniform as applied to the same

class of property in the assessed area.

As required by Minnesota statutes, a special assessment that exceeds the special benefit is a taking of property without fair compensation and violates the

14th amendment of the United States Constitution.

"We ask that when considering this project to please keep these things in mind," Gutzkow said.

She also told the Council that they had consulted with Attorney Sam Calvert and Assessor Julie Kalahar, "Who have advised us to bring this petition and our

concerns to you and that they are willing to represent us and assess our property to determine change in our property value, if any, should it become necessary. Another concern expressed was since the sewer system isn't being addressed in this project, will they be looking at a future special assessment," she said.

Gutzkow ended her presentation by thanking council members who had returned her calls and taken time to listen to her concerns.

No response was given by the Council. The item was not on the agenda but was presented during the public comment time at the beginning of the meeting.

**"We strongly encourage you as a Council to consider our concerns as you discuss this project in your planning meetings."**

— Mary Gutzkow

## Issues to consider before fostering

(Continued from Page 1A)

That's why having that education and exposure ahead of being a foster parent is important."

Erickson said the majority of foster parents who have been successful started out in small ways and were exposed to children with special needs. By getting involved on a smaller scale, they are also able to find out what is truly right for their own family dynamic.

One way those who are considering becoming foster parents or adopting a child can prepare is to first become a mentor with the Kinship of Morrison County.

Mentors are volunteers whose role is that of a friend and a role model to the youth. Individuals, 18 and older, married couples and families can apply to become mentors.

Once they have attended an orientation meeting and

have gone through the application process successfully, which includes a background check, a reference check and an interview with Kinship staff, the search for

a "match" begins. Mentors are matched by gender and shared interests.

Mentors commit to spending a minimum of four hours per month with their "Kinkid," engaging in activities that cost nothing or very little. The commitment lasts for a year at a time, but can be renewed annually.

"Thinking about being a Kinship mentor prior to being a foster parent would be an excellent way to start

with that exposure because if you're involved in Kinship, many times you bring those kids into your family situation, too," Erickson said. "You do things together and you can see how your own kids react to that because if you're thinking about being a foster parent, it is also im-

portant to think about your own family, what your own kids experience and what that might be like."

Erickson also reminds people that there are other ways to support children who are in foster care without becoming a foster parent.

"There are still a lot of things you can do that are important. We have a number of foster kids and adopted kids living in the community and kids who are with families that are seriously mentally ill. All of those families need support," she said.

Sometimes families need a break, which is where respite care can come in handy. Erickson said there are two forms of respite care — formal and informal. While formal respite care requires a license and certain guidelines to be met, informal is not as strict — it can be anyone a parent or guardian simply feels comfortable with and whom can provide the family with extra support.

For more information, people can call (320) 632-2951.

**"... having that education and exposure ahead of being a foster parent is important."**

— Melanie Erickson



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