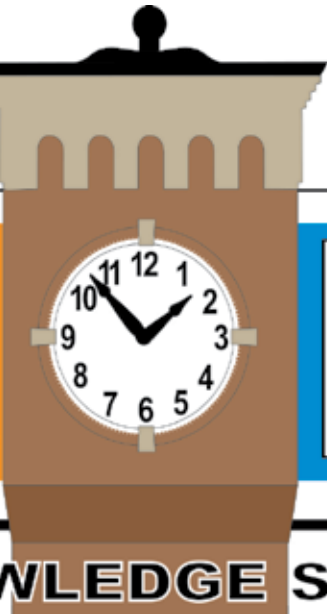


J.A.C.K.S. N



JACKSON AREA COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE SOURCE

Home for the Holidays Takes on a New Meaning

- page 2



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If your business or organization would like to submit an article for FREE for publication please do so by the 3rd Friday of each month.

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Parlour of Jackson
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Warner Elementary School

From Our Family to Yours, Happy Holidays

*By Morgan Riggs,
Managing Editor*

As we come to the end of this challeng-



ing and unique year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on all that has happened in our world and in our community.

In March, life changed for each and every individual. Board meetings turned into Zoom calls, parents re-learned about the Byzantine Empire while serving as their children's assistant teacher, and businesses pivoted in order to keep their doors open. As a small business this held true for us, and in April, JACKS went entirely digital for the first time. With the Stay Home, Stay Safe order in place, adapting was the only way to continue what we love.

Two months later, JACKS reached its fifth-year mark in the Jackson community. When this publication began, I was fourteen years old, and ever since it has had a profound impact on my life. The articles each month share not only essential information about what is happening in our town, but also a new perspective in which to view it. This was made possible because of the support of each and every one of you: our readers, writers, advertisers, and community partners. With you,

we have been able to share what makes our community special, and this year more than ever, community matters.

In just this issue alone, there are stories that remind me how fortunate we are to live here. On page 3, Imagine Planet - a local nonprofit - shows us how learning continues even in difficult times. On page 4, Rick Chambers shares about the collaboration that made distributing over a million pounds of food possible during this pandemic. On page 5, Val Herr reminds us about the strength of our local businesses and how important it is that we support them. The list goes on and on within this issue, all of those published in the past, and those yet to come.

Although this holiday season looks a little bit different for everyone, it remains a time to be thankful, give to others, spend time with loved ones, and set intentions for the New Year. Whether you buy a coffee for the person behind you in line, leave a card for a neighbor missing their extended family this season, or find your loved one a gift at a local business, there are still ways to come together as a community.

As we finish this year out and enter 2021, I am hopeful that we will continue to adapt and be there for one another. I want to thank you all for your continued support, and from our JACKS family to yours, Happy Holidays!



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Why Talking to Your Baby is Essential

*Contributed by
Community Action Agency*

There are many ways in which to talk to your child: reading them books, narrating what you're doing with them throughout the day, playing games with them, or even just telling them about your day or thoughts you are having. All of these manners of communication with your child can be instilled from the time they are infants and continue as they develop and grow.

Though it may at times seem silly to be talking out loud constantly to an infant who is unable to talk back to you, it is remarkably important for your child's development that you speak to them from the moment they are born. From ages 0-3, the more you talk to your child the more it positively affects their development. The act of speaking to your infant is one of the most important ways they will begin to learn about language, both how to understand it and - eventually - how to use it themselves to communicate.

In fact, children can begin to understand the voices of their parents while they are still in the womb. Children use the adults around

them and their speaking to understand and interpret sounds, which becomes apparent when your infant begins to coo and babble, exploring how to make sounds such as "ba" and "ga". As your child attempts forming words, talk back and forth with them so they begin to learn the structure of communication, the listen and response that we engage in. When you talk with your child and engage with them in this manner, you are laying the foundation for them learning to speak. The more you do this and encourage your child, the more they will start talking themselves.

It is also important to note with this that once your child starts reaching the toddler age, you want to make sure that you stop using any "baby talk" and make sure you pronounce words correctly, as this will greatly help their ability to learn to speak. This has also been linked to the fact that children who are talked to more are more prepared when they enter school.

Talking to and with your child, even when they are a baby and cannot talk back to you, also builds their relationship with you. When you are engaging with your child consistently,

you are showing them love and they are learning how much you care about them. It is one of the ways in which you can help foster a healthy attachment with your child, something that we know is essential for their development.

The way in which you talk to your child can also help to make them feel comfortable and happy, like when you smile at them while talking, and when you express your love them while you are playing and engaging.

So now that you know how important it is to talk with your child - go and talk!

1. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=M9xUgZw8bVcC&oi=fnd&pg=PA7&dq=talking+to+your+baby&ots=5grxVpjhtp&sig=L_qdNlp3SftFBTktnrbqCYztjbl#v=onepage&q&f=false

2. <http://www.kencrest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/The-Power-of-Talking-to-Your-Baby.pdf>

3. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=M9xUgZw8bVcC&oi=fnd&pg=PA7&dq=talking+to+your+baby&ots=5grxVpjhtp&sig=L_qdNlp3SftFBTktnrbqCYztjbl#v=onepage&q&f=false

Happy Holidays from Imagine Planet & Medusa

*Contributed by
Imagine Planet*

Happy and safe holidays to all from Imagine Planet! We are still closed to the public, but the animals need care every day still. If you check out our Facebook page you can watch me reading books to the animals on all sorts of science topics.

Sweet Baby, the sulfur crested cockatoo, and Roxie, the blue and gold macaw, really miss all the people and attention. We have done some upgrading while we have been closed and the reptiles in particular are very happy.

One of our new friends is a green tree python (Morelia viridis). This snake comes from New Guinea and the surrounding area.



in the tree and not from a close relationship. Both snakes coil up on branches in the rainforest with their head in the middle of the coil, waiting for prey to happen by. They are ambush constrictors and mainly eat small rodents.

Medusa does not like to be handled much and is mainly for looking at. She is a fascinating example of camouflage and adaptive coloration.

It is often confused with the very similar looking emerald tree boa, found in South America. Their similar shape and coloration come from very similar lifestyles

Watch our Facebook page for information about our reopening. We all look forward to seeing you again. Have a safe and happy December.



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A Reason to be Thankful: More than 1 Million Pounds of Food Distributed to Struggling Households

*By Rick Chambers,
Marketing &
Communications Lead,
United Way of
Jackson County*

JACKSON, Michigan [Nov. 23, 2020] – Despite the lingering pandemic, an army of local community volunteers, government leaders, businesses, nonprofits and others have distributed an estimated 1,032,300 pounds of food to struggling households across the greater Jackson area in recent months.

“If you’re looking for a reason to be thankful, here it is: the can-do spirit of people and organizations uniting together to help our community,” said Ken Toll, President & CEO of United Way of Jackson County (UWJC).

“This collaborative effort shows what can happen when we all work together. Jackson is a City of true grit and resiliency. I am pleased to see these qualities applied to a pandemic food response that’s helped keep countless people safe and healthy,” said City of Jackson Mayor Derek Dobies.

The coordinated effort began in June as part of the Farmers To Families initiative under the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the federal Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Since then, semitrailers of boxed food and produce have been coming weekly to the Boos Center, United Way’s campus or the former Vermeulen building. Volunteers unload the boxes, sort them for pickup and help load them for area food pantries, which distribute them to households in

need. Nationwide, Farmers To Families has provided an estimated 119.9 million food boxes since the pandemic hit.

The COVID-19 crisis has worsened food insecurity everywhere from local towns to entire nations. In 2019, about 10.5% of U.S. households—that’s 13.7 million households—had difficulty getting enough food at some point; since the pandemic hit, that number has more than doubled, according to an estimate by Northwestern University.

On top of supplying food, volunteers have been purchasing, collecting and distributing household essentials—from baby formula and diapers to personal hygiene and sanitizing supplies—across Jackson County since March. That effort, made possible through the Jackson COVID-19 Action Network and United Way’s COVID-19 Response Fund, has delivered more than 230,000 items thus far.

Colleen Sullivan, Community Labor Liaison for UWJC, said the support of volunteers and organizations has been crucial to these efforts.

“The economic effects of the pandemic continue to impact vulnerable families, including working ALICE households,” she said, referencing Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed individuals. “We couldn’t come close to meeting their needs without the many volunteers and organizations that have stepped up.”

In addition to scores of individual volunteers, Sullivan listed the businesses

and organizations supporting this work: FP Miller Co.; Miller Trucking and Storage; City of Jackson, including Mayor Derek Dobies, Chief Equity Officer John Willis, and Parks & Recreation staff member Roy Ryan; Michigan State Police Jackson Post; LJ Ross Associates; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 252; Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1095; United Auto Workers; International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers Local 435; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Partial To Girls; Jackson MI Giving Back To The Community; Dungeytreeti Heritage Foundation; Oasis of Love; Young People of Purpose; Sacred Heart Chapel; St. John’s United Caring Center; New Hope Church; Church of God; Lily Missions Center; St. Vincent DePaul Society; Harmony Baptist Church; Faith Temple Church of God in Christ; First Presbyterian Church of Jackson; Christ Lutheran Church; James W. Outreach; Grow Jackson; Family Service and Children’s Aid; KSS Enterprises; Angelo Williams; and volunteer leaders Maria Rubio, Laura Stephens, Delia Johnson, Tom Crowe Gary, Cindy Eby and Christine Carlson.

The federal program is expected to continue through December, meaning volunteers are needed each Saturday for unloading trucks and preparing food boxes for pickup. If you’re interested in volunteering, contact Lois Dunning at UWJC, ldunning@uwjackson.org.



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Learn to Be a Tourist in Your Hometown

Ring in the New Year

By Val Herr



While we can all admit 2020 was a challenge and we are all looking forward to turning the page into 2021, I can't help but take this time to reflect on the lessons 2020 has tried to teach us and have hope that our community learned a few of them.

2020 taught us to be flexible. Regardless, if we were trying to plan a wedding or hold a fundraising event, we learned we must be flexible and have plans A, B and C.

2020 taught us about family time. For some of us, family time became not something special to look forward to, but instead, a daily part of our lives. I suspect that some of us spent more time with the people in our homes in 2020 than

we have ever.

2020 taught us about rationing, not just toilet paper! But how to make do with the food and supplies and we had in the very back of the cupboards.

2020 taught us about our community. Our community, that stepped up to the plate and came together in ways we never could have imagined. We saw businesses although closed, hand out food and personal supplies from their parking lot, our manufacturers who changed from making auto parts to making face shields, our restaurants who had to adapt from being closed, to take out only, to 30% capacity and then back to take out only. I could write an entire book on how amazing our community did in their response to Covid.

While we all hope that by changing years, life will go back to normal I'm afraid that isn't reality. We will still have people and

businesses in our community struggling. It's been estimated that 1/3 of art and cultural organizations like museums, orchestras and art schools, restaurants and small businesses will not survive 2021. That due to Covid shut downs/restrictions and people having less income these organizations will simply run out of money. Stop and think about that. Think about 1/3 of those businesses not being here in Jackson anymore. How much you would miss them, your friends that work there will be out of work, the memories that won't be able to be made.

While you have heard this from me before and I'm sure you will hear it again, the choices we make impact our community. Where we go, where we spend money, who we promote on social media-it all matters.

I love my hometown! I don't love it because of where it lands on a map.



I love it because of the people, places and businesses that are here. I love it because while raising my boys we were able to make memories and celebrate life's victories at places that are special to us.

2021 is going to be a difficult year for many of our businesses. Don't forget about them when you are making plans for special events, needing to get out and do things or

those just because moments. Show Jackson how much you love it by spending your time, energy and money with all the things that makes this town special.

I want to wish you all a very Happy New Year and thank you for your support in allowing me every month to share the wonders of our amazing hometown. I look forward to seeing you in 2021.

Give Kids a Fun Break this Winter: Jackson YMCA Offers Great Indoor & Outdoor Activities

*By Bonnie Gretzner,
Director of Marketing &
Communication, Jackson YMCA*

Looking for something fun and safe for kids to do this year? Sign them up for the Jackson YMCA Winter Break Camp, where they will have a great time with two weeks of activities, crafts and field trips.

Open to ages 5-14, camp is held Dec. 21-23 and Dec. 28-31 downtown at 127 W. Wesley St. Daily and weekly rates are available, and camp is open to members and the community. While the schedule is still being finalized, activities include a visit to a Christmas tree farm, a trip to a deer farm, holiday arts and crafts, nature and urban hikes, swimming and sledding (weather permitting).

"Parents can be assured that we

are adhering to local, state and national health guidelines," said School-Age Coordinator Lindsay Wood. "Safety is our highest priority. We have been closely following the many new pro-

cedures we put in place for summer day camp and our School-Aged Child Care program." Those guidelines include temperature checks, frequent

hand washing, face coverings and smaller group ratios.

Lindsay and her team also know that months of altered routines due to COVID-19 are taking a toll on many kids. Camp activities are designed to let kids learn new skills, get outdoors and make new friends.

"Kids need this kind of socialization more than ever," Wood said. "With some kids remote learning at home and schools having had to restructure the school day to allow for physical distancing, we know many kids are suffering from the effects of isolation. Our camp lets them have fun and meet new friends. One parent told me that she was so grateful for our summer camp program because it made her daughter feel normal again."



Jackson YMCA Winter Break Camp

Week 1: Dec 21-23
Week 2: Dec. 28-31

Cost

Daily Rate: \$39

Members /
\$49 Community

Week 1: \$99 / \$132
Week 2: \$132 / \$176

*Financial Assistance
is available*

What to Bring

Lunch, water bottle,
swimsuit/towel and
winter gear for out-
doors.

To Register

Visit JacksonYMCA.
org or call 517-782-
0537.

Habitat for Humanity & Dow Pilot Carbon Mitigation Program to Make Homebuilding More Sustainable

*Contributed by
Habitat for Humanity*

Habitat for Humanity and Dow are partnering on a new carbon mitigation program that continues the organizations' shared commitment to sustainability and the impact homebuilding has on the environment. This program builds on an existing 38-year partnership between Habitat and Dow, as the organizations continue to explore new ways to leverage science, technology and employee expertise for safe, sustainable and affordable housing.

Dow is funding research that will inform how Habitat can better reduce its environmental impact when building Habitat homes.

While many sustainability initiatives are focused on conservation tasks or installation of efficient products after a home is built, Dow and Habitat are working to address sustainability during the building process. The initial program consists of three phases:

Phase 1: Measurement – Habitat assesses its current construction methods to calculate the level of greenhouse gases emitted during a typical Habitat build.

Phase 2: Testing – Habitat trials different building materials and construction methods to compare the emissions from each approach to the organizations' benchmark carbon footprint. Proposed solutions will be evaluated for sustainability and cost-efficiency.

Phase 3: Application – Habitat creates technical guides to share the most effective methods of reducing emissions with its network of U.S. affiliates.

"We're proud that the work we're doing with Dow across Michigan can help improve the communities of families Habitat serves across the nation," said Sandy Pearson, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Michigan. "We will be working diligently to vet different approaches to more sustainable construction and look forward to sharing our results."

"Dow continually searches for opportunities to amplify strategic partnerships and engage with the social sector for programs that align to shared values and expertise – and this expansion of Dow's long-

standing partnership with Habitat for Humanity is no exception. By working together to solve challenges, we uncover better ways to make even greater impact. This project supplements our efforts to mitigate the carbon footprint across Dow's operations, and it also supports our communities and our partners do the same in their journeys toward a low carbon future," said Mary Draves, chief sustainability officer and vice president of Environment, Health and Safety, for Dow.

Habitat and Dow launched the carbon mitigation program with local Habitat organizations in Michigan, where Dow is headquartered. Participants, including Habitat for Humanity of Michigan, Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity, Habitat for Humanity of Kent County, Midland Habitat for Humanity, Greater Jackson Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity Grand Traverse Region, each have the necessary construction teams and resources required to complete and document the work of the program. These organizations are developing the profile of Habitat's current carbon footprint and will complete the multi-phase project to identify potential changes to Habitat's construction process.

This initiative is in line with Dow's recently announced climate change commitments: where by 2030, Dow will reduce its net annual carbon emissions by 5 million metric tons, or 15% from its 2020 baseline. Additionally, Dow intends to be carbon neutral by 2050, in alignment with the Paris Agreement. The company is committed to implementing and advancing technologies to manufacture products using fewer resources and that help customers reduce their carbon footprints.

"For nearly 40 years, Dow has continued to support our organization as a partner and champion for affordable, sustainable housing," said Julie Laird Davis, vice president of corporate and cause marketing partnerships. "We're excited to be working on this initiative together to find innovative solutions to improve homes for the families and communities we serve."



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Frost Elementary	Salvation Army
Greenfield	Shahan Apartments
Hillsdale CAA	Springport Elementary
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The 25 Worst Offenders in Your Home that Cause Pre-Mature Aging & Disease Pt. 4

By Victoria Beaman
Owner, The VSpa



Your home is your sanctuary, your safe spot, your haven. That is why the LAST thing you likely want to think about is whether it could cause you harm.

The truth is, products in your home, including those you may love and use daily, could be a source of toxins that contribute to premature aging and chronic disease. Below is a list of the top 25 worst offenders.

These are ranked in count-down order to the worst-of-the-worst, though please keep in mind there is a fair amount of subjective interpretation in any such ranking. Factors such as your own current health, the prevalence of these in your home, and more certainly come into play. So after reading through these, you should decide for yourself which may be your own "worst offenders." With that noted, this is important: Please "scan your own emotions" during and after reading this, and make sure you do NOT feel anxious or guilty. Don't feel like you have to empty your home of everything or go find some cave to live in. And by all means, don't feel guilty if you didn't know some or all of this. The companies behind these products have no requirement to let you know their products can cause cancer, diabetes, premature skin aging and more. And of course they'll fight these facts tooth and nail, including shooting the messenger (that's us)... because your awareness of this is not exactly good for their business.

The truth is, though, there is no such thing as a toxin-free world. The best you can do is to, one, eliminate and reduce your exposure to them in a reasonable way. Start with those

that feel most concerning to you and your loved ones, and work your way through the list. As you'll see, there are plenty of alternatives out there. And two, and even more importantly, take the right steps to detoxify your body and optimize your immune system with the healthiest diet and lifestyle choices.

This provides the most powerful "shield" against toxins so you can look your best, feel your best, and live a long life doing it. If you are not already signed up for The Art of Anti-Aging's major summit on all the most effective ways to do exactly that called Your Best Years Start Now, head there and sign up. It's free, and life-changing! So consider this import report a form of empowerment. Start making changes where you feel it is most necessary, and work your way forward. Because when you keep taking small steps, they do add up to big progress.

And YES, please do feel free to share this report with others you care about!

9. NAIL POLISH

Polishing your nails with typical polish means you're potentially being exposed to triphenyl phosphate (TPHP), a flame retardant and plasticizer known to alter hormone levels, affect sperm and act as an endocrine disrupter. Even if your nail polish claims to be "3-Free" (nail polish manufacturers have been claiming to be free of the three toxins toluene, formaldehyde and dibutyl phthalate (DnBP) since the 2000s), it still likely contains TPHP, which was widely used as a replacement for DnBP.

What to do if you prefer a polished look? Buff your nails for a natural sheen or at the very least seek out a nontoxic TPHP-free formulation.

8. MATTRESS

Inside your mattress is likely a toxic stew of chemicals located just inches from your face. VOCs, polyvinyl chloride

(PVC, a reproductive toxin) and flame-retardants are all par for the course in mattress production. Unfortunately, that means you could be inhaling dangerous chemicals while you sleep. The next time you're in the market for a mattress, think not only about comfort, but also about toxicity.

Mattresses made using natural latex and wool are healthier alternatives, as are organic mattresses made from at least 95 percent organic content. Look for certifications such as the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), which requires 95 percent certified organic material and prohibits the use of chemical flame retardants, polyurethane (found in memory foam) and other toxic chemicals.

7. TAP WATER

Every once in a while a story about contaminated tap water makes headlines, like the Flint, Michigan water crisis that exposed more than 100,000 people to unsafe levels of lead. Yet, there's a good chance your tap water is also toxic... perhaps not according to federal and state regulatory agencies, but harmful to your body nonetheless.

When EWG evaluated nearly 50,000 public water utilities in the U.S., more than 250 contaminants were detected. Although many are legal under the Safe Drinking Water Act, some were found at levels that exceed those deemed safe by scientific studies. The EWG study detected:

- 93 contaminants linked to cancer
- 78 linked to brain and nervous system damage
- 63 associated with developmental harm to children or fetuses
- 38 linked to fertility problems
- 45 linked to hormonal disruption

What can you do?

Have your tap water tested (or at least check out EWG's online Tap Water Database

to see contaminants found in your area) and install a water filter to remove contaminants accordingly. A more immediate solution is to pick up one of the newer reusable water bottles that contain a built-in filter, which is also useful if you tend to refill often from drinking fountains or the office sink.

6. CELL PHONE AND WI-FI ROUTER

In November 2018, the final results of the National Toxicology Program's (NTP) animal study on the effects of cellphone radiation were released, revealing "clear evidence" of a cancer link. Male rats exposed to high levels of radio frequency radiation (RFR), the same type used by 2G and 3G cellphones, developed cancerous heart tumors. There was also some evidence that exposure to RFR used by cellphones could cause brain tumors and adrenal gland tumors.

"These studies should have been done before more than 90 percent of Americans, including millions of children, started using this technology day in and day out," Olga Naidenko, Ph.D., senior science advisor for children's environmental health at EWG stated. Indeed.

There's even concern that your cellphone could be a source of exposure to organophosphate flame retardants and plasticizer chemicals—so consider washing your hands after use (especially before eating) or minimizing how long you spend with your phone in your hand (use hands-free options instead or, if using a tablet, prop it up on a stand instead of holding it).

Don't worry — I'm not asking you to give up your cellphone. But given the data, it makes sense to keep it as far away from your body as possible.

This includes while you're talking and texting as well as when you're not (don't store it in your pocket or bra, or sleep with it under your pillow). Children, who are still developing, should use cellphones sparingly, if at all. This applies to all sources of RFR, including computers, tablets and Wi-Fi routers. The latter typically operate in a similar frequency band as cellphones but are not held up against your head while in use, which may decrease their risk. That said, try to locate your router as far away from your living space as you can (as opposed to installing it directly next to your office desk).

5. PAINT

Ready to change the look of your wall color? It can be great for freshening up and modernizing your space, but not so great for your health, depending on what type of paint you use.

Paint is a major source of hormone-disrupting, cancer-causing VOCs. It may contain preservatives that release formaldehyde, additives (like nonylphenol ethoxylates) that disrupt hormones and solvents like ethylene glycol, which are respiratory irritants and reproductive and developmental toxins.

Phthalates, linked to hormone disruption, are also found in many paints. Proper ventilation is crucial while painting, but so is choosing the right paint. Here's what to look for and avoid:

- Choose low- or no-VOC paints (they may also be Green Seal-11 certified), which means less than 50 grams per liter of VOCs for flat paint and less than 100 grams per liter for non-flat paint
- Avoid antifungal and antimicrobial paints, which may have pesticides added
- Milk-based paints and mineral-based or plant-based pigments tend to be healthier than water-based latex or oil-based paints

Stay tuned to learn more about Toxic Homes in part 5.


XXOO

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Become a Morning Person: Create a Morning Routine You are Excited About

By Alex Cash,
Cocreative Life Coaching

Having a great morning routine can help you feel more accomplished throughout the day and more satisfied with your life in general. Take these steps to make a plan for an amazing morning you can be proud of.

1. Determine what things are important to you to get done first thing in the day. Some examples of this may include: exercise, journaling, reading, meditation, day planning, meal prep, etc.

2. Chose a target wake-up time based on how much you'd like to get done. If you determine this to be 6:00 a.m. and you don't typically get up at that time, begin working toward that wake-up time.

3. To get used to waking up earlier, start by getting to bed at a decent hour that works for you. Also begin gradually moving up the time you wake up by 15-30 minute intervals until you are at your target time.

4. Don't feel you have to complete all the things that are important to you every single morning. Rather make a list of things to pick and choose. Let that time be a blank slate and insert in things from your list. Aim to do each of the things at least a couple times per week.

5. Do what's right for your body. Try to keep "snoozing" to a minimum, but if there are some days that your body needs to sleep an extra hour, honor that. Keep fluidity in your morning routine that lends itself to doing what feels right.

To the left are the things I do most often during my morning time. Other things that sometimes get spliced in are:

get coffee with a friend, give a coaching session, watch t.v., sleep in. I feel my most productive in the morning and I really enjoy using this time to do things that I really enjoy and enrich me. If you are also a morning person, share your morning routine with me at alex@cocreativelifecoaching.com

Alex's Morning Routine

Alarm at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m.

Read from a book

Write in my journal

Yoga, Pilates, or stretching

Walk outside

Eat breakfast and pack lunch

Drink tea

Leave for work at 8:50 a.m.

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