

NOVEMBER 2024

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*CASA of Larimer
County:*

**Helping Children Find
Permanent, Loving
Homes and Connections**

Photo by Kimball Nelson Photography

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An exclusive magazine serving the South Fort Collins residents in Clarendon Hills, Coventry, Fox Hills, Laurie, Le Jardin, Oakridge Village, Paragon Point, The Ridge, Southridge Greens, and Taft Canyon

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August 25	October 2024
September 25	November 2024
October 25	December 2024
November 25	January 2025
December 25	February 2025

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Have feedback, ideas, or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 25th of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas, and photos to: shenwutan@bestversionmedia.com.

HOA Submission Information

Are you on the association board for your subdivision? Contact us for information on how you can submit articles, updates, reminders, events, and more to the residents. We create customized homeowners association sections at no cost to the HOA or the residents.

EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



Hearing
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November

At the time this magazine went to print, all event times and locations were accurate, but please check event websites for the most current information. Some events may have been postponed or canceled.

FRIDAY, NOV. 1

Free Live Music for First Friday

@ Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures

Time: 5:30 - 7 PM. Cost: Free

<https://globalvillagemuseum.org/>

FRIDAY, NOV. 1 (RECURRING MONTHLY ON 1ST FRIDAY)

Poudre River Irregulars Traditional Jazz on Avo's Patio

@ Avogadro's Number

Time: 4 - 7 PM

Cost: \$15 for adults, \$5 for students

<https://www.prijb.com/>

SATURDAY, NOV. 2

The Dinner Detective Comedy Mystery Dinner Show

@ Marriott Fort Collins

Time: 6 - 9 PM. Cost: \$72.95

https://www.thedinnerdetective.com/fort-collins/murder-mystery-tickets-showtimes/?utm_source=Vesta&utm_medium=Referral

TUESDAY, NOV. 5 (RECURRING MONTHLY ON 1ST TUESDAY)

Gulo Gulo Poetry Writing Workshop

@ Wolverine Farm Publick House

Time: 6 - 8 PM. Cost: Free

<https://www.wolverinefarm.org/events/month/2024-11/>

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6 (RECURRING MONTHLY ON THE 1ST WEDNESDAY)

Music Trivia

@ The Lyric

Time: 6 - 8 PM. Cost: Free

<https://www.lyriccinema.com/community-events>

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6

Plant Swap!

@ Lucky's Market

Time: 5:30 - 7 PM. Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/plant-swap-tickets-932466230597>

SATURDAY, NOV. 9 (GROUP MEETINGS RECUR MONTHLY ON THE 2ND SATURDAY THROUGH JUNE)

Sons of Norway's Tribute to the 10th Mountain Division and 99th Battalion

@ Zion Lutheran Church, Loveland, CO

Time: 11:30 AM - 2 PM. Cost: Free

<https://steinfjell.com/>

TUESDAY, NOV. 12

ClimateCon! Fort Collins

@ Colorado State University, Lory Student Center

Time: 9 AM - 5 PM

Cost: \$200 for general admission, free for students with valid ID from 3 - 5 PM

<https://climatecon.world/>

THURSDAY, NOV. 14

A History of Fort Collins Through Postcard Views

@ Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures

Time: 6 - 7:30 PM. Cost: \$5 per person, reservations requested at

globalvillagemuseum.org

<https://globalvillagemuseum.org/>

FRIDAY, NOV. 15 AND SATURDAY, NOV. 16 Fall Dance Concert

@ Colorado State University School of the Arts, University Center for the Arts

Time: 7:30 - 9:30 PM. Cost: No charge for CSU students, \$10 for youth (under 18), \$15 for seniors (62+), \$20 for adults

<https://csuartstickets.universitytickets.com/w/?cid=187>

THURSDAY, NOV. 21

American Sign Language Social (recurring monthly on the 3rd Thursday)

@ New Belgium Brewing Company, Inc.

Time: 5 PM. Cost: Free

<https://www.newbelgium.com/visit/fort-collins/>

THURSDAY, NOV. 21

(RECURRING MONTHLY ON THE 3RD THURSDAY) Drag Bingo, hosted by Krisa Gonna

@ Looking Glass Escape Lounge

Time: 7:30 PM. Cost: \$12

<https://lookingglassbar.com/calendar/month/>

THURSDAY, NOV. 21

Providing Hope, Learning Life Lessons in Oaxaca, Mexico

@ Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures

Time: 6 - 7:30 PM. Cost: \$5 per person, reservations requested at

globalvillagemuseum.org

<https://globalvillagemuseum.org/>

FRIDAY, NOV. 29 (RECURRING WEEKLY ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY UNTIL 12/21/24) Holly Jolly Hideaway

@ FoCo Cafe

Time: 6 - 10 PM. Cost: \$5 for reservations

https://www.facebook.com/events/861707605294700/862182568580537/?active_tab=about

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IS THERE AN EVENT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE HERE IN A FUTURE ISSUE? Email shenwutan@bestversionmedia.com about future events.



Salutations, friends and neighbors!

Let me start off by asking each of you to sit back and reflect on how often you practice gratitude. Is it monthly? Weekly? Daily? Never? Always?

Now, gratitude is something we don't just have to save for the end of November. It's something we can express on a regular basis throughout the year. Some individuals tend to focus on what they lack rather than recognize the abundance within their lives. Our perceptions stem from the nature of our thoughts – whether positive or negative – and how we frame those. I challenge all of us, myself included, to try to reprogram those thoughts, practice gratitude more frequently, and embrace a mindset of abundance.

Speaking of gratitude, I'm thankful for the opportunity to write about nonprofit organizations such as CASA of Larimer County, which is featured in this month's magazine issue. CASA's mission is to provide support to children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect and to champion for nurturing, steady connections for them. I'm certain many people see the value of the contributions that CASA makes for the communities it serves.

We've also compiled a list of events taking place in November, as promised. Something else to appreciate is how much Fort Collins and the surrounding areas have to offer their residents!

Now, I'll leave you all with some food for thought. What are some things in your life that you feel fortunate to have? In what ways are you living in abundance?

Thank you to everyone for reading our magazines and for sharing your stories. We are grateful for you all, dear residents.

Until next time,

Shen Wu Tan

South Fort Collins Neighbors | Content Coordinator
shenwutan@bestversionmedia.com



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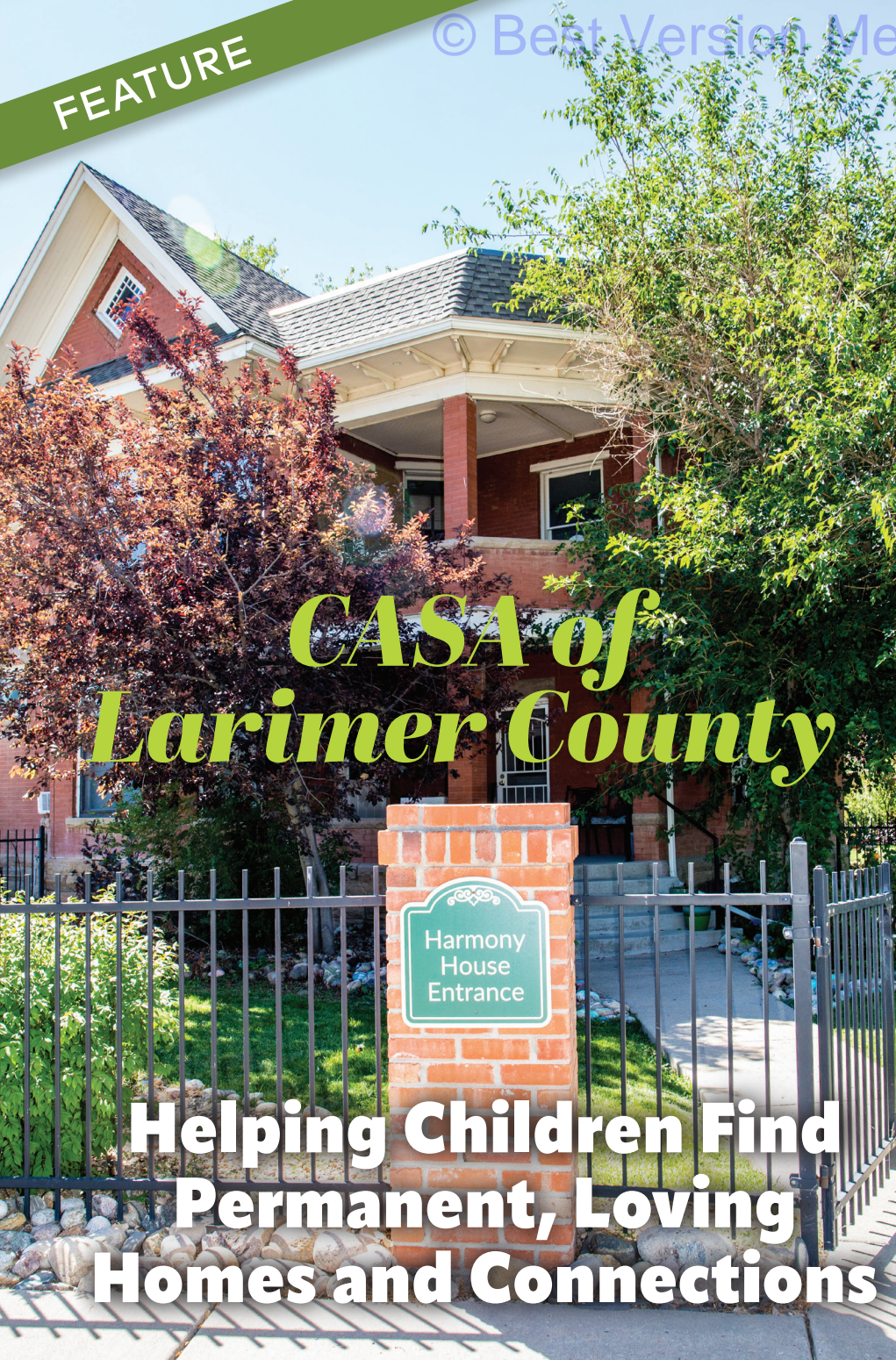



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CASA of Larimer County

Helping Children Find Permanent, Loving Homes and Connections

By Shen Wu Tan

Photos by **Kimball Nelson Photography**

Growing up, it was often a full house at Dakota Montez's family home.

It wasn't just Montez and his immediate family, but cousins on his father's side who were all living together under the same roof periodically. That side of the family struggled with substance abuse during many of Montez's childhood years.

"Substance abuse disorder is not a linear journey," Montez says. "There would be times of sobriety, and we were all very close, and then there were times where it literally took a village to come together to help support each other."

As a result, Montez's parents became kinship providers, or foster parents for family members, for his cousins when he was about eight years old, caring for eight to 10 children at times. They continued to do so on and off for the next decade. The situation with his cousins introduced a young Montez to volunteers from a nonprofit called CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates).

"I saw the impact of CASA volunteers from a very early age, and some of the CASA my cousins had are still in their lives today," says Montez, who became involved with CASA of Larimer County in 2019 and now works as the nonprofit's community engagement manager. "That is initially why I became a volunteer.... The youth we serve are strong, resilient, and so special. It is amazing to be a part of this journey and see some of the remarkable bonds our volunteers and youth make with each other."

The CASA program provides children whose families are involved in the court system with an advocate who offers regular support and meets with them weekly, usually for 12 to 18 months. Volunteers will take youth out for recreational excursions such as to local parks and work closely with their assigned children's support network including counselors and doctors. CASA volunteers collect and report updated, objective information to the courts so that judges can make informed decisions in regards to children's best interests.

The mission of the nonprofit is to "advocate safe, nurturing, and permanent connections to family and community" so children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect have the opportunity to thrive, according to Montez.

CASA volunteers specifically handle open cases in dependency and neglect courts. Families end up in these courts when a child's safety is at risk from physical or substance abuse, overall neglect, domestic violence, or other similar situations. The intention of the court is to secure a



permanent home for these children, whether that's through adoption or reuniting them with their biological parents, if possible, or placing them with other family members.

Another program offered by CASA of Larimer County is called Family Connections, which helps maintain contact between children and relatives who are unable to live or spend time together following a crisis. Starting in 2021, the nonprofit incorporated Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) into both programs. TBRI teaches about the effects of trauma on brain development and behaviors to equip caregivers, parents, volunteers, and staff with ways to strengthen their familial relationships.

Jen Ryan, executive director of CASA of Larimer County, first learned about the nonprofit in 2015 and began volunteering a year later. She was initially assigned to work with two sisters, meeting with them for over a year and a half.

“Being there for them while they went through many changes, advocating for their needs, and giving them space





to just be themselves built a trust and connection that was very special,” Ryan says. Last year, she received a letter from one of the sisters that shared how much that time spent with Ryan meant to her. “That was the most special gift I have ever received.”

Ryan officially joined CASA as the program director in 2018 before moving up to executive director in 2021.

“I think one of the most valuable things that we can give to our children is our time,” Ryan says. “When we take that time to reflect back on a child, how important they are, and advocate for the things and services they need, we are making a difference in how they see themselves

and their future. That difference empowers a child, a family, and strengthens our community.”

Judges John-David Sullivan and William Dressel founded CASA of Larimer County in 1987, about nine years after a juvenile court judge named David W. Soukup brainstormed the idea that laid the groundwork for the national organization. In 1977, Soukup launched the first CASA program in Seattle, Washington. He previously handled a court case in which he had to make a critical life decision for a young girl who experienced child abuse. But the judge wrestled with gaps of information in the case, prompting him to recognize the need for trained

volunteers to advocate on behalf of abused or neglected children.

Today, there is a National CASA/ GAL (Guardian ad Litem) Association for Children that consists of a network of 941 state organizations and local programs, operating in 49 states, all except North Dakota, and the District of Columbia.

CASA of Larimer County, a member of this national association, was the first Court Appointed Special Advocates program in Colorado. In 1991, the Harmony House was donated to CASA of Larimer County and repurposed as a venue for a supervised visitation and safe exchange program. This August, the nonprofit finished a renovation to

the original Harmony House, offering more space for families, accessible entrances and bathrooms, and room to host on-site training sessions.

The local organization has more than 175 active community volunteers along with several supporters, per Montez. Yet, more than 50 children were waiting to be assigned a CASA volunteer as of earlier this year. Due to this level of demand, CASA is seeking more volunteers.

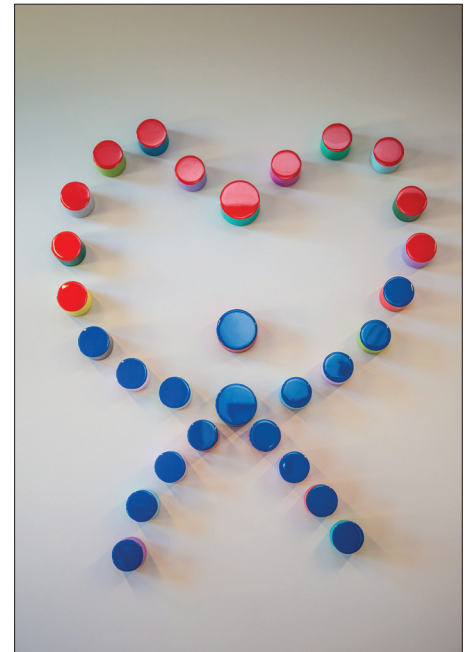
“Children with a CASA volunteer are more likely to find safe, permanent homes, more likely to succeed in school, and half as likely to re-enter the foster care system once their case has been closed,” Montez says. “Becoming a CASA volunteer is the most important way that you can make a positive difference in the life of a child in our community.”

In order to serve as a volunteer, one must be at least 21 years of age; able to commit about 10 hours a month; complete background checks

and a fingerprint scan; submit an application form; interview with a CASA case supervisor; attend 30 to 40 hours of trainings and an open house event or a virtual introductory informational session; and have a passion for serving as a role model, mentor, and advocate for children.

CASA also hosts public events that community members can attend including a monthly open house, a yearly summer golf tournament at the Harmony Country Club, and two major fundraisers annually. One of the fundraising events is a gala called Night of Hope that occurs in the spring. The nonprofit additionally partners with local businesses to host CASA in the Community Nights.

To learn more about the nonprofit, visit <https://www.casalarimer.com/>. CASA of Larimer County is located at 3105 E. Harmony Road in Fort Collins. The organization is open Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.



DO YOU KNOW A COMMUNITY MEMBER WHO HAS A STORY TO SHARE? Nominate this person to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Send your nominations to shenwutan@bestversionmedia.com.

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November's Full Moon in Taurus:

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

Submitted by **Kat Beasley**



As November unfolds, the skies will grace us with a celestial event observed and celebrated for centuries: the full moon in Taurus. This astrological occurrence isn't just a beautiful sight to behold; it also carries significant meaning and influence, especially for those attuned to the rhythms of the universe. Let's explore what November's full moon in Taurus means and how its energies might impact our neighborhood.

The Significance of the Full Moon in Taurus

Taurus, an earth sign ruled by Venus, is associated with stability, security, and the material world. When the moon is full in Taurus, it illuminates these themes, inviting us to reflect on our relationship with the physical aspects of life—our home, possessions, finances, and even our bodies. This full moon is a time to ground ourselves, seek comfort, and appreciate life's simple pleasures.

What This Full Moon Means for Us

1. Focus on Home and Comfort:

Taurus is all about comfort and creating a secure, nurturing environment. This full moon may inspire many of us to focus on our homes—perhaps you'll feel a strong urge to declutter, redecorate, or create a cozy space as the colder months approach. It's a perfect time to indulge in home-cooked meals, soft blankets, and warm lighting, making your living space a sanctuary of peace and relaxation.

2. Financial Reflection:

The full moon in Taurus is also a time to reflect on our finances. Taurus energy encourages us to seek stability and security, so you might find yourself reassessing your budget, investments, or savings plans. This is a good moment to ensure that your financial foundation is solid, allowing you to feel secure and prepared for the future.

3. Connection to Nature:

Taurus has a deep connection to nature as an earth sign. During this full moon, spending time outdoors can be particularly grounding and rejuvenating. Whether it's a walk in the park, gardening, or simply enjoying the crisp November air, connecting with the natural world can help align you with Taurus's steady, calming energy.

4. Sensuality and Self-Care:

Venus, Taurus's ruling planet, governs beauty, love, and pleasure. This full moon is an excellent time for self-care rituals celebrating the body and senses. Whether it's a warm bath, a massage, or indulging in your favorite foods, take time to pamper yourself and enjoy the physical sensations that bring you joy.

5. Stability in Relationships:

Taurus values loyalty and long-term connections. Under this full moon, you may feel a stronger desire to solidify relationships, whether romantic, familial, or within the community. It's a time to appreciate the people who bring stability and support into your life and perhaps have those heart-to-heart conversations that deepen your bonds.

How to Harness the Energy of the Full Moon in Taurus

- **Set Intentions for Stability:** Use the energy of this full moon to set intentions around creating stability in your life. Whether it's financial, emotional, or physical, focus on areas where you want to feel more secure and grounded.

- **Engage in Grounding Practices:** Consider activities like yoga, meditation, or simply walking barefoot on the earth to help ground your energy and connect with the earth's stabilizing force.

- **Reflect and Release:** Full moons are traditionally a time for release. Reflect on any habits, thoughts, or situations that no longer serve your well-being, and consciously let them go.

- **Celebrate the Senses:** Make time for activities that engage your senses. Cook a favorite meal, listen to soothing music, or enjoy the texture of a cozy sweater. These small pleasures can bring great comfort and joy.

A Time for Reflection and Gratitude

As we gather under November's full moon in Taurus, it's a reminder to slow down and appreciate the tangible aspects of life. In a world that often feels fast-paced and uncertain, this full moon invites us to find peace in the present moment, to cherish the beauty around us, and to build a life that feels secure and fulfilling.

So, as you look up at the full moon this November, take a moment to reflect on what brings you comfort, stability, and joy. Whether it's the warmth of your home, the support of loved ones, or the beauty of nature, let this full moon inspire you to cultivate and celebrate those gifts in your life.



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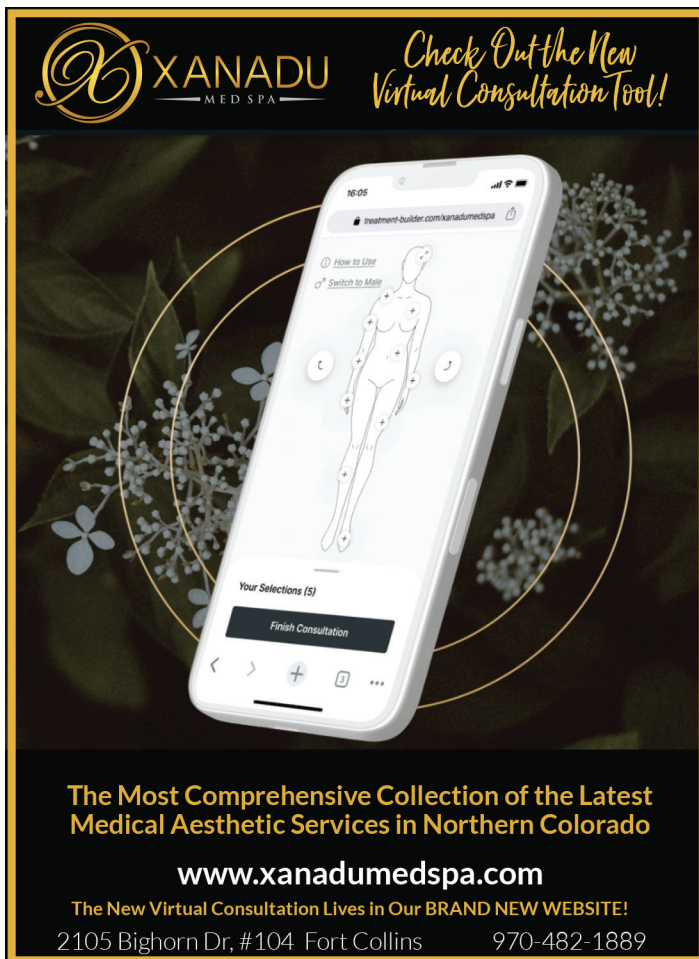
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By **Susan Baker**

While many are familiar with how circulatory issues affect heart health, it is also essential to know how they can negatively impact cochlear anatomy, nerve signals, and auditory function. Research indicates high blood sugar levels may damage the inner ear's small blood vessels and nerves, diminishing our hearing ability.

Type 2 diabetes is dysfunction in how our body regulates and uses sugar (glucose) as fuel. This chronic disease results in excess sugar circulating through the bloodstream. When the pancreas does not produce the proper amount of insulin to regulate sugar movement, cells may take in less sugar than normal. As a result, **elevated sugar levels** may damage circulatory, nervous, and immune systems.

Regarding prevalence, here are **CDC Estimates** for your easy reference.

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index

Since type 2 diabetes may develop slowly, many are unaware they live with this serious condition. If and when these **signs or symptoms** persist, or if you have a family history of this condition, proper evaluation by your primary care doctor or endocrinologist is recommended:



- Increased thirst
- Numbness, pain, or tingling in hands or feet
- Unexpected weight loss
- Frequent urination
- Slow healing sores
- Blurred vision

With respect to diabetes and hearing loss, did you know...?

- “Diabetes and hearing loss are two of America’s most widespread health concerns. More than **34 million** people in the U.S have diabetes, and an estimated **34.5 million** have some type of hearing loss,” per the Shoheit Ear Associates Medical Group, Inc. Those are large groups of people, and it appears there is a lot of overlap between the two.
- “Of the **88 million** adults in the U.S who have prediabetes, the rate of hearing loss is **30% higher** than in those with normal blood glucose,” according to Columbus Speech and Hearing.
- The prevalence increases with age, reaching **26.8% among those 65 years or older**, being the highest among American Indians/Alaska Natives, people of Hispanic origin, and Blacks.

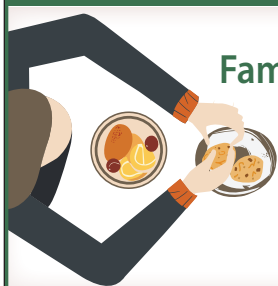
As patients typically learn about this systemic disease’s impact from primary care providers, endocrinologists, eye doctors, or podiatrists, more should get sound advice from their hearing care providers. Did you know hearing loss occurs **almost twice as often** in adults who have diabetes than in those that do not?

Do you have diabetes or a family history of this condition that may increase your risk of diabetes-related hearing loss? With the daily challenges of having diabetes or caring for

loved ones who do, effective communication is vital. Please proactively see us for periodic evaluations to monitor your type and degree of hearing loss. In close coordination with your other healthcare providers, we will suggest healthy options to reduce the risk of inner ear damage, optimize hearing acuity, and enhance quality of life. In the spirit of the holiday season, we **give thanks** for all opportunities to be of service.

Susan Baker is the owner and operator of Advanced Hearing Services in Fort Collins. She has been helping people with hearing loss and tinnitus for the past 24 years. Please call (970) 221-5249 for an appointment today.

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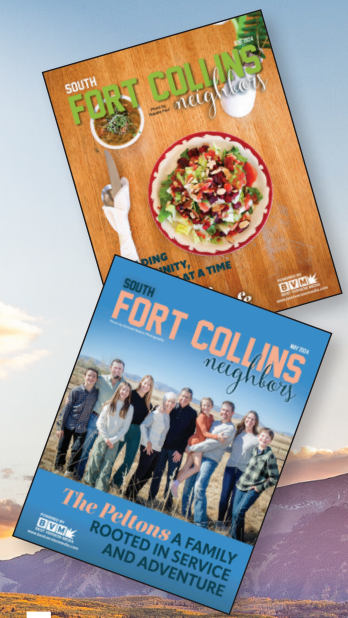
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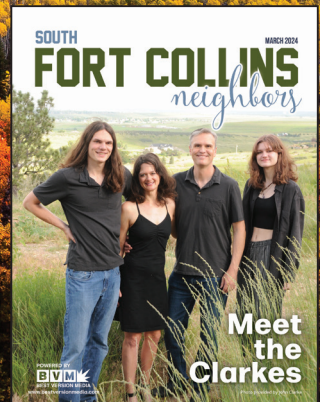
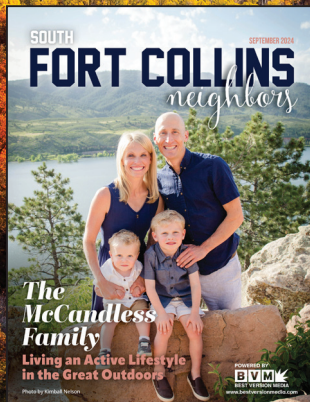
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BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

By **Lucinda Hahn**

This is a great go-to dish for when you have guests for the holidays. Make it ahead of time at night, then pop it in the oven in the morning. It makes a hearty, belly-warming breakfast — and leaves you free to enjoy your loved ones over coffee.

Ingredients:

- 6 eggs
- 1 cup half and half
- 3 Tbsp. chopped onions
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 6 slices of Texas toast (buy it pre-made in the grocery freezer section)
- 1 pound breakfast sausage
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Take the Texas toast out of the freezer about two hours before you begin cooking.
2. Brown the sausage in a frying pan. After draining the grease, set the sausage aside.
3. Once the Texas toast has been thawing for two hours, stack three slices and cut them into 1" to 1.5" until all the toast is cubed.
4. Grease an oblong baking dish with butter. Cover the bottom with bread cubes.
5. Spread the sausage on top of the bread. Sprinkle the cheese across the sausage until evenly covered.

6. Beat the eggs. Stir in the half and half, salt, and pepper. Pour the mixture over the bread, sausage, and cheese. (Hint: It won't look like you have enough egg mixture, but you do!)
7. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and place it in the refrigerator overnight. In the morning, place the pan in the oven at 350° Fahrenheit and bake the casserole for about 30 minutes or until bubbly.



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