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## Help prevent falls

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May is Older Americans Month. Each year, millions of older people—those 65 and older—fall. In fact, more than one out of four older people falls each year, but less than half tell their doctor. If you, or a loved one, are over the age of 65, there are some simple things you can do to prevent falling and becoming injured.

### Make Your Home Safer

- Get rid of things you could trip over.
- Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Put railings on both sides of stairs.
- Make sure your home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs.

### Talk to Your Healthcare Providers

- Ask your healthcare provider in the Physical Therapy department at Ringgold County Hospital to evaluate your risk for falling and talk with them about specific things you can do. They may recommend that you do exercises that make your legs stronger and improve your balance.



## Physical Therapists join staff



*Nathan Greisen, PTA*



*Jill Johnson, DPT*

What if a girl from Creston, IA, went to graduate school in Omaha, NE, and met her lab partner's best friend? And what if they discovered that his mother went to school with her aunt in Humphrey, NE, the town of 850 people where he grew up? And what if they ended up together in the Physical Therapy Department at Ringgold County Hospital in Mount. Ayr, IA?

If all that happened, it would be true, and just part of the story that brought Jill Johnson and Nathan Greisen to RCH.

Energetic and excited, the PT department's two newest members started work full time in mid-April. They had been recruited several months earlier by Mitzi Hymbaugh, HR director for the hospital, to cover for another physical therapist while she was on maternity leave. "We're young and had decided to travel for a while before settling in one place," said Jill. "We spent three months in New Mexico, then three months in Alabama. That's when Mitzi called, and we headed here for the short term." They ended up loving the staff and the community. It turned out there was a need in the PT department and they were both offered full-time positions. "They're the right positions, at the right time. We're really happy with the decision," she added.

Nate's undergraduate degree is in Exercise Science. He has a particular interest in sports performance and athletic injuries. "Lots of people become exercise specialists and work as personal trainers or go into corporate wellness," said Nate. "After I graduated, I decided to pursue Physical Therapy and get a Physical Therapy Assistant degree."

Jill always knew she wanted to be a Physical Therapist. She has a degree in Athletic Training and a doctorate in Physical Therapy. "I have my license in Athletic Training and I'd like to use it, but I went to PT school right away."

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## RINGGOLD COUNTY HOSPITAL

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Although they work in the same department, they do different work and help different patients every day. “In the mornings I work in cardiac rehab, pulmonary rehab, and help patients with peripheral artery disease,” said Nate. “In the afternoons I do strictly physical therapy.” Jill is doing physical therapy full time, along with the rest of the PT team: Jill Ehlen, Ruth Smith, and Shyanne Allen.

For a facility the size of Ringgold County Hospital, that seems to be a large staff. “You’d be surprised how busy we are,” said Jill. “We care for all the inpatients when we get orders from a doctor, and we have many outpatients who come with injuries, or are recovering from surgery.” She added that that for a smaller hospital, having an aquatic therapy pool, and new

hypnotherapy services is unusual. “RCH is keeping up with what’s offered in bigger hospitals.”

Nate’s passion is sports performance, and he gets satisfaction working with athletes. But he also really enjoys working with the older population. “I like to use my entire knowledge base going into the rehab process.”

Jill loves the variety of patients she gets to work with at RCH. “From pediatrics to a 94-year-old, I never know who will be a part of my day.”

Both Nate and Jill are excited to be in Mount Ayr, working at Ringgold County Hospital, and doing what they’ve been trained to do. Jill is from Creston, “It’s close to where I grew up. I have family nearby, and at the same time, it’s refreshing to be in a new community.”

## Physical health impacts mental health

*May is Mental Health Month* was started 69 years ago by Mental Health America to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone. This *May is Mental Health Month*, the focus is on how a healthy lifestyle may help prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also help people recover from these conditions.

“It is important to really look at your overall health, both physically and mentally, to achieve wellness,” said Debra Robertson, RN, CCM, Program Director for Ringgold County Hospital’s Senior Life Solutions program. “Getting the appropriate amount of exercise, eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep and reducing stress – it’s all about finding the right balance to benefit both the mind and body.”

So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally. That is why this year’s theme for *May is Mental Health Month* – Fitness #4Mind4Body – is a call to pay attention to both your physical health and your mental health, which can help achieve overall wellness and set you on a path to recovery.

### Mental health is important for all ages

May is Mental Health Month, and for Debra Robertson, it’s a critical message to get out to both adults and teens. Senior Life Solutions is an intensive outpatient group therapy program, is designed to meet the needs of adults over the age of 65 struggling with depression and anxiety often related to aging. Family members, physicians, or other health professionals can refer individuals to the program.

At the other end of the spectrum, Robertson is

personally part of a task force to address the mental health related issues that are facing teens in the county. Law enforcement, students and faculty, the ministerial association, community agencies, public health and the hospital are all represented on the Suicide Prevention Awareness Task Force.

Through the efforts of the students, school, and support of the task force, area youth will have an avenue to express their concerns pertaining to bullying, sex, drugs etc. With the right support in place, it will evolve to be the resource teens need.

A Mental Health Aid eight-hour training course is being offered in the community to help teach people what to do when their loved one is facing a mental illness. With the entire community coming together, Robertson hopes to bring awareness to the importance of mental health and break down the stigma allowing for people of all ages, whether they are 15 or 65, to get the treatment they need.



*For more information on the task force, the training course, or Senior Life Solutions, contact Deb Robertson at 641-464-4468.*

*For more information on May is Mental Health Month, visit Mental Health America’s website at [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may).*

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