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Microgreens entrepreneur markets good health, flavor

ParkerGreens thrive under grow lights in the basement year-round

Mick Polich
Storm Lake Times Pilot

Liza Parker of rural Aurelia didn't get the planting bug early on her life, so there were no great epiphanies about reconnecting with the Earth as a kid, and her company ParkerGreens microgreens wasn't quite a seed of a thought, as they say.

"Although I grew up with a mother who loves planting and growing flowers, I would say that I didn't start playing in the dirt until we moved to our current acreage where I have enjoyed planting a garden every year," Parker said.

She grew up in Denison and moved to Cherokee in 2004.

"I knew every little about farming, until I met my husband Rod," Parker said. "He crop farms with his family."

She worked at Degree Of Style in Cherokee, as a hair stylist for 15 years.

"When Rod and I had our fourth baby, we decided it would be in our best interest for me to be at home with the kids," she said. "Although I am, happy to be a stay-at-home mom, I felt the want to still be connected in the community in some way, as well as supplement some income."

In doing some research online she across the concept of growing microgreens. She started growing her own two years ago.

They now thrive under grow lights in her basement year-round and when they're only a few inches tall she harvests them carefully with a knife.



Packaged and ready to sell.

She devised her own packaging and designed and printed a logo. She delivers her product once a week to Daily Apple and Coffee Tree in Storm Lake and Noggin' Water in Cherokee.

WHAT ARE MICROGREENS?

Microgreens grew out of the "back to the Earth" environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

They began showing up on chef's menus, as early as 1980 in such places as San Francisco in southern California.

As a business, the microgreen movement started to catch fire in the 1990s and have been ending up in recipes, store shelves and homes ever since.

Lisa's varieties of microgreens are arugula, basil, beets, kale, cilantro and a mixture called "rainbow mix," but there are up to 25 different varieties of microgreens.

Microgreens can be used in salads, but also as their own stand-alone dishes. Contrary to belief, microgreens are not sprouts, and have differences. Unlike sprouts, microgreens are not grown in water, but are planted in soil or a soil substitute such as peat moss.

"Microgreens are a unique niche product," she said.

"They are not prominent in this area, yet are a highly beneficial superfood."

Her microgreens have an 11-day grow cycle. She plants them in dampened soil, covers them with a tray, stacks them four to five high, and places a brick on top to help the seed set in to germinate.

I decided that maybe the community would appreciate fresh, chemical-free locally grown year round microgreens. I must say that I was correct. People have taken to these tiny, yet mighty greens.

— Liza Parker



Liza Parker with multiple varieties of microgreens. (Photos by Dolores Cullen)

She lets them set for four days, misting them daily until about day seven. After they stretch to about an inch, she waters them thoroughly from the bottom under the tray and places them under grow lights, until they are ready to harvest.

The lights are set up on timers to ensure the proper amount of light.

THE HEALTH PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

And where do her seeds come from?

"I buy organic seeds from a reputable seed source online, called True Leaf Market," Parker said. "I find offering organic food to be an important piece to our overall health. Every little step in avoiding added chemicals, is a step closer to feeling your best."

Over the last decade she's become more interested in healthier living.

"I have struggled with some health ailments, that has grown my curiosity to-ward more holistic living," Parker said. "Over the years in visiting with people about the state of our health, I have come to realize I am not alone in the health struggles. So many of us are just living, and not thriving."



Microgreens on keto bowls at Coffee Tree.

Microgreens aren't the cure-all answer, but they are a great step in the right direction. Microgreens are anywhere from four to 40 times more nutrient-dense than their fully grown counterparts.

This is why they are considered a superfood. "They're tender, fresh greens that provide great flavor to so many dishes," Parker said. "I decided that maybe the community would appreciate fresh, chemical-free locally grown year round microgreens. I must say that I was correct. People have taken to these tiny, yet mighty greens."

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Cherokee employment in good hands

Paul Struck
Cherokee Chronicle Times

With retail, industrial and corporate employers desperately seeking valued workers throughout the country, Cherokee is fortunate to have the local presence of Aventure Staffing working daily to help resolve the ongoing labor shortage.

Aventure Staffing at 221 E. Main St. provides employment solutions at every level. The Sioux City-based company helps employers to build a stronger and more reliable workforce by securing and screening applicants and helping them design a plan to enter a job in their areas of interest and expertise.

One of Cherokee's newest large employers — Lopez Foods — has utilized Aventure Staffing since purchasing the former Tyson Deli plant in Cherokee two years ago with plans to operate a large meat processing facility here.

Lopez credits Aventure with its yeoman effort to secure employees despite the company's struggles to overcome the labor, supply chain, and economic setbacks from the pandemic and its negative impact on the progress of its growing customer base that would lead

to an increased workforce. Currently, Lopez in Cherokee employs about 50 workers with plans to reach 400 at peak production as the company overcomes the effects of the pandemic.

Cherokee is also in the process of building a new meat locker supported by more than 80 local investors and the relocation and expansion of the Cherokee Locker and its management team currently in downtown Cherokee. Ground has been broken in a new industrial/commercial complex on the south side of town adjacent to U.S. Highway 59.

Hy-Vee Distribution, Cherokee Regional Medical Center, Cherokee Schools, Corteva, CMHI and RJ Thomas Mfg. are also among the city and county's largest employers and boast skilled workforces, but always on the lookout for new employees as their services expand.

Good things are in store for Cherokee County as it overcomes the pandemic and resultant setbacks for employers determined to achieve and thrive in their chosen community. This is a credit to the city and county employers and employees, and to Aventure Staffing for assisting effectively in the process of developing a solid, dedicated workforce.



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'Opportunities for people from all walks of life'

■ Aventure Staffing provides opportunities for local employment

Celia Brocker
Spencer Reporter

For Spencer residents who are attempting to find part-time or full-time employment, Aventure Staffing could be the resource they're looking for. Founded in 1983 as the Rudy Salem Employment Agency and rebranding in 2007, Aventure's mission is to find employees for its clients and to connect employees with job opportunities.

"For nearly 40 years, our goal has been to connect job seekers with employers and positively impact the communities we serve," Marketing Coordinator Shiloe Tramp said. "Our founder, Rudy Salem, believed in honesty, straightforward conversations and treating people like they are the most important people in the world. That mindset continues to drive Aventure today in our commitment to treating each employee and client like part of the family."

With openings in industrial work, office careers and health care positions, Aventure offers a wide range of jobs in multiple industries at different skill levels. Currently, Aventure has local part-time and full-time opportunities from \$13 to \$25 an hour, and salaried careers up to \$100,000 within an hour of Spencer.

"Aventure has opportunities for people from all walks of life," Tramp said. "Our openings can range from entry-level opportunities to management positions that require experience and industry knowledge."

Besides its Spencer location, Aventure has other Iowa branches in Sheldon, Humboldt, Cherokee and Sioux City. The Spencer branch does most of its hiring in Spencer, Spirit Lake and Estherville areas, though Spencer Branch Manager Amber Vazquez said Aventure's branches can help one another to find the best position for their employees.

"If I have somebody apply who lives in between here and Sheldon and if I don't have something here in Spencer for them, I can send their information over to our Sheldon branch and they might have something we don't have," Vazquez said. "We can share with our other branches to see if they have



Amber Vazquez, branch manager for Aventure Staffing's Spencer location, is one of the staff connecting clients to ready-to-work employees. (Photo by Celia Brocker)

anything where they're at, and they do that a lot with us too."

To find a job with Aventure, employees would first need to fill out an application on the company's website, followed by an interview with an Aventure worker.

Through the interview, Aventure determines what kind of background the employee has, what kind of work they're looking for, their minimum pay requirements, how far they're willing to drive and what hours they're willing to work. Vazquez said though employees may apply for one job, Aventure can send their name to multiple places even if they apply to only one job.

"Based off all the information from the interview we know where we can send them and where we can't send them, or what would be a good fit," Vazquez said. "We have a lot of people that might apply for one job and then we end up plac-

ing them at another job that is another fit or that they might like better."

Vazquez said clients who use Aventure to find employees do not have to pay unless Aventure finds them an employee. Meanwhile, employees who are looking for a position won't have to pay Aventure a fee at all.

"The people who apply and work for us, we don't make any money off of them, it doesn't cost them money to use a staffing agency, that's kind of a misconception," Vazquez said. "Some people when they come to staffing agencies, they think they're paying somebody to find them a job and they're not, it doesn't cost them anything."

When applying for a job, Vazquez said having specific skills are not as important as they used to be, as the current priority among employers is commitment rather than qualifications.

"A lot of places have actually really low-

ered their standards of what qualifications somebody needs for the job," Vazquez said. "A lot of places are willing to train, so you may have only worked retail or a gas station, something like that, and you could come in with no manufacturing experience and we could probably place you."

She added, "I would say a lot of employers right now are more looking for employees that are going to stay with the job, have good attendance and be a long-term employee. They're looking more at their work history and longevity rather than what their skills are."

Vazquez encouraged individuals seeking employment opportunities, whatever they may be, to reach out to Aventure. Because there are many employers are looking to hire good workers who are going to stick with the position, Vazquez said there are a lot of job openings employees may not be aware Aventure can connect them to.

"It's nice if you're on the job hunt to come in and do this," Vazquez said. "We have a lot of connections, we know of a lot opportunities and a lot of clients they may be a good fit for."

”
We have a lot of connections, we know of a lot opportunities and a lot of clients they may be a good fit for.

— Amber Vazquez,
Aventure Staffing Branch Manager



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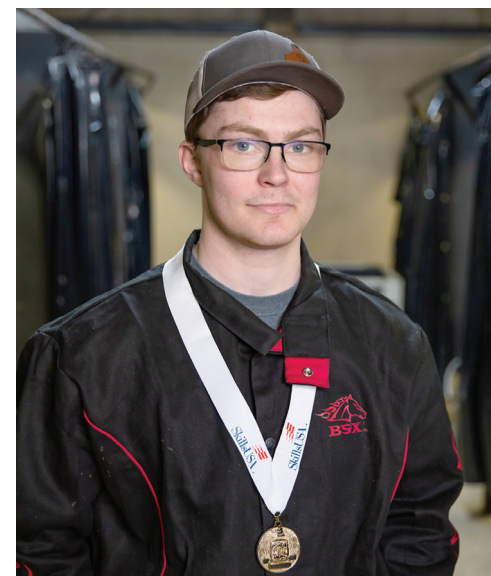
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ABOVE — Iowa Lakes student Jacob Tuttle of Spirit Lake earned first place at the Iowa SkillsUSA competition in the welding.

LEFT — Iowa Lakes Community College students place at the Iowa SkillsUSA competition in motorcycle technology and power equipment technology. Pictured are (front row, from left) Jagger Horken of South Sioux City, Nebraska; Isaac Bruggeman of Inwood, Jacob Stark of Council Bluffs (back row) Blake Renner of Aurelia and Dylan Short of Cherokee. (Photos submitted)

Iowa schools, industries aim for future student success

Seth Boyes
Dickinson County News

The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council recently announced a dozen Iowa school districts will be joining the Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers — or BEST — program during the upcoming academic year. The Storm Lake Community School District was among the 12 listed this year. State officials said the BEST program is aimed at supporting partnerships between schools and businesses by allowing teachers and industry professionals to work together and give students first-hand experience in specific fields.

“High-demand STEM jobs in Iowa have grown by 10% in just the last two years and are expected to double by 2029,” said Jeff Weld, executive director of the STEM Council. “Our STEM BEST partners are producing the wave of talent the state needs to remain competitive and economically vibrant.”

The STEM BEST initiative launched in 2014, and has tallied 147 new or expanded partnerships since then. This year’s partners may each be awarded up to \$25,000 in matching funds. Program officials said the awarded dollars may be used for curriculum development and coordination, educator training, workplace-classroom integration or preparing a work-based learning environment.

“It’s exciting to see the STEM BEST Program continue to grow and the impact it has on students and local employers as a result of the collaboration,” Weld said.

And the state isn’t the only one promoting partnerships between educators and industries.

Officials with Iowa Lakes Community College said seven students earned top rankings during the Iowa SkillsUSA competition held in early April in Ankeny. Jacob Tuttle of Spirit Lake and Blake Renner of Aurelia were among them. The college also noted three Iowa Lakes students came away with a second or third

place ranking at the competition.

SkillsUSA was founded as a nonprofit in 1965, with the goal of strengthening the country’s skilled workforce. The nonprofit says it now encompasses more than 130 trades, technical and skilled-service occupations, and it has served some 13.9 million members since its founding.

Students entered in the April competition tested their proficiency in more than 50 trades — anything from precision machining to the culinary arts. Iowa Lakes said professionals, trade associations and labor organizations are involved with the individual contests and help set benchmarks for competency in their respective fields.

Tuttle gained a first-place ranking in the Iowa SkillsUSA Welding Championships. Organizers explained the event was a timed competition, designed to test one’s ability to use various welding tools and associated processes, such as weld-measuring gauges, oxy-fuel and plas-

ma arc cutting as well as arc welding.

Renner earned a first-place ranking in the power equipment technology competition. That contest tested students’ skills in many areas, including understand-



It’s exciting to see the STEM BEST Program continue to grow and the impact it has on students and local employers as a result of the collaboration.

— Jeff Weld,
Executive Director of
the STEM Council

ing both two- and four-cycle engines as well as the related theories that go along with the standard machines in the industry. Competitors need to understand drive trains, hydraulics and electrical systems. Customer service skills also came into play — as they rotated through the various stations, competitors were judged and scored on physical and verbal skills.

“The competitors who represent their state at the SkillsUSA National skills conference are the most highly skilled students in the nation,” said Emily Gottsche, Iowa Lakes welding technology program coordinator and assistant professor. “It’s rewarding as an advisor to be able to instruct these students and watch them achieve their goals.”

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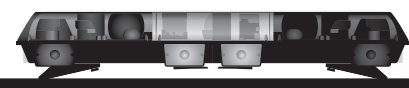
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The City of Milford, population 3015, is accepting applications for the position of Police Chief. Milford is located in northwest Iowa, also known as the Gateway to the Iowa Great Lakes. The previous Chief retired after 22 years of service to the community. The incumbent will be responsible for oversight of all aspects of Police Department operations. Staffing consists of four sworn officers. Dispatch services are provided by the Dickinson County Sheriff's Department. Salary DOQ, plus excellent benefits. Position reports directly to the Mayor and will join an experienced and committed City leadership team.

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The Chief must establish residency within five miles of city limits within the first six months of employment. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume with salary history, completed application form available at <https://milford.ia.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/employment-application-2022.pdf> and at least five work related references via mail to: City Administrator, City of Milford, Box 536, Milford, Iowa 51351. Or via email at irensbach@milford.ia.us. Applications will be received until position is filled. The City of Milford is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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Lakes Area archaeological study provides hands-on experience

Seth Boyes

Dickinson County News

A recent archaeological field study near the Abbie Gardner Historic Site in Arnolds Park provided not only insight into local history, it also helped several students gain one of the most common qualifications for entry-level field tech jobs — experience.

“It takes the student out of the classroom, literally into the field for a hands-on learning experience,” State Archaeologist John Doershuk said.

Doershuk led a group of eight students during the four-week field study, which spanned from mid-June to mid-July. Doershuk has previously led student teams studying the Minnewaukon area north of Spirit Lake. But this year, he was offered the chance to lead a dig near the Gardner Cabin.

Adam Frasher, an incoming senior at the University of Northern Iowa, was part of the local field study.

The anthropology major said he had always loved archaeology — adding he was a fan of Indiana Jones films when he was young — and he continued to be drawn to the subject while studying at UNI. He learned of the Gardner Cabin study through the college’s anthropology department and decided working with Doershuk on a historic site in the Lakes Area was too good an opportunity to pass up.

The student-archeologists ultimately performed excavation work on about 10 square-meters of the Gardner lot — less than 3% of the total property. The team carefully sifted through layers of soil using wire screens, brushes and sometimes by hands. Previous archaeological studies of the site were few and largely concentrated near the original pioneer cabin itself. Frasher said that left most of the lot as it was before the Gardner family settled there in 1857.

“It’s such a completely different culture, environment and different way of life,” he said. “It just fascinates me to see what this developed area once was.”

Similarly, University of Iowa senior Pearl Tyler was interested in exploring the intersection of eras on the Gardner Cabin site. She had previously studied the Minnewaukon site as part of Doershuk’s team, and this year’s dig near the Gardner Cabin property peaked her interest. She explained that, while the Min-



newaukon site mostly contained items predating European pioneers, the Gardner Cabin had the potential of holding items from both before and after the native peoples encountered settlers.

Tyler said, while one would expect to find stone artifacts like arrowheads and flaked materials while excavating a prehistoric site, items such as nails, coins and buttons are tell-tale signs of the historic period — a night and day difference, she said.

One of the sites Tyler worked on at the cabin site yielded a number of items, such as a glass bottle, barrel hoops, bricks and even ceramic shards which Tyler said would have been brought by settlers moving westward. One such shard bore a maker’s mark, which Tyler hoped to use to investigate the find further.

“I love archeology and the puzzle it presents,” she said. “I’m always asking questions of how something is and why it is.”

And Doershuk said that puzzling process is an important part of the experience for the students, adding it’s a major part of what separates archaeology from simply collecting items which are old.

“Archeology is not rocket science, but it is full of concern for context and provenience,” Doershuk said. “It’s all about what things are associated with other things, and that can be on the basis of time associations, space associations or form associations.”

Ultimately, Doershuk hopes the recent field study will help his students get a good sense of the process behind their possible career choices.

“*It takes the student out of the classroom, literally into the field for a hands-on learning experience.*”

— John Doershuk,
State Archaeologist

ABOVE — University of Iowa sophomore Maverick Meimann (left) and University of Northern Iowa senior Adam Frasher (right) examined a shard of the broken glass found near the base of the granite monument.

BELOW — The students unearthed a dime minted in 1899. (File photos)



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Questions? Call Les at **(712) 262-4117**
EOE

SCAN CODE TO APPLY ONLINE



CLAY CENTRAL/EVERLY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



is accepting applications for
+ ONE ROUTE BUS DRIVER FOR 2022-2023
+ ALSO NEED SUB BUS DRIVERS
Must be able to obtain CDL license. School provides training.

Applications accepted until position filled. Please send letter of application, resume, references, along with the application found on the school's website to:

Jeff Scharn,
Assistant Superintendent
Clay Central/Everly Community School
PO Box 110 | Royal, IA 51357
(712)933-2242
jscharn@claycentraleverly.org

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CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- WAIT STAFF** | year-round | part-time
Earn extra cash working events; nights and weekends with flexible schedule
- BARTENDERS** | year-round | part-time
Earn extra cash working events; nights and weekends with flexible schedule
- KITCHEN HELP** | year-round | part-time
Primary responsibilities include dish washing and simple food preparation working in our Blue Ribbon Catering operation
- MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS ASSISTANTS**
seasonal | full-time or part-time
Building, grounds, and barn cleaning; landscaping and lawn maintenance; general maintenance (basic carpentry and painting); event set-up and tear-down; ability to drive/operate machinery preferred.

To apply for any of the positions listed above, please stop by our Administrative Offices located in the Events Center (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm). For additional information, call 712-580-3000.

The Clay County Fair & Events Center is an equal opportunity employer.





EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MMCRU is searching for the following positions for the 2022-23 school year:

Secondary FCS Teacher • Head Archery Coach
Assistant Archery Coach • Paraprofessionals

Substitutes Needed:

Teachers, Bus Drivers, Paras, Custodians

If interested, please send or email a letter of application, resume, and referescs to:

Jill Alesch, HR Director jill.allesch@mmcruroyals.org

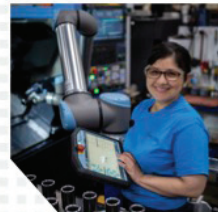
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Full-Time & Part-Time

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St. Luke Lutheran Home

RN/LPN: 6AM – 6PM shift 6PM – 6AM shift	Dietary Cook: 6AM – 2PM shift 4PM – 7PM shift
C.N.A.'s: 6AM – 2PM shift 10AM – 6PM shift 2PM – 10 PM shift	Laundry Aide: 6AM – 2PM shift

NEW STARTING WAGES for LPN/RN/C.N.A.'s

Riverview Terrace

RN

Dietary Cook: 6AM – 2PM shift
 Personal Service Attendant: 6AM – 2PM shift
 2PM – 10PM shift

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St. Luke Lutheran Home
1301 St. Luke Drive, Spencer, IA
Riverview Terrace Assisted Living
1501 St. Luke Drive, Spencer, IA
Also can apply online at:
www.stlukelh.com



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\$5,000.00 SIGN-ON BONUS

Tyson Employment Office
420 Flindt Drive
Storm Lake, IA 50588

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CON INCENTIVO DE ASISTENCIA Y PRIMAS DE TURNO NOCTURNO

BONO DE REGISTRO DE \$5,000.00

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Call Karen at 712-832-3213 for more information!

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Contact Kristine to apply or through Indeed.com
hr@shinebros.com
www.shinebros.com
Phone: 712-262-5579 ext. 153

225 10th Ave. SE, Spencer, IA 51301

All Positions: Must Be 18 Years of Age or Older to Apply