

## **HIT IT HARD**

“Moving in the Right Direction”

By Bob Kling

I really think Indianola is on the edge of taking those important steps to firmly establish itself now and in the future as a great community to live and raise a family. I've always bragged that it's a great community with great schools but I've always felt we could be better. Unlike many Iowa towns, we've been blessed with growth. The growth has been slow but it's also been steady.

Thanks to a \$1 million donation from Casey and Abbie Blake to the Indianola Community School District, the Indianola Community Youth Foundation was established to match that dollar amount. The money will go toward expansion at the Indianola Middle School to construct a large multi-use, indoor athletic facility that may include additional athletic courts and an indoor track. Future fundraising may go toward completion of the football field. The foundation is an ongoing foundation that is not just about buildings, “Its about Youth!” For more information about the foundation, go to [www.icyf23.com](http://www.icyf23.com).

Our community has another big project that has been in discussion by a different group called the Indianola Community Foundation and wants public input to guide and direct it. If you remember over the past decade there were attempts to establish a wellness facility or a “Y” here in Indianola. The need and desire for some form of wellness facility still exists and a diverse group of Indianola citizens has established the Community Wellness Facility Planning Committee to prepare a comprehensive wellness facility proposal that best meets the needs of the greater Indianola area.

No one is being left out of this planning. The proposal will be presented to a joint meeting of the Indianola City Council, Indianola school board, Simpson College and the general community in December of this year. What this committee wants is public input. What do you want for Indianola? The committee is seeking your opinions both online at [www.indianolafoundation.org](http://www.indianolafoundation.org) and in person at 6 p.m. Thursday, July 29, in the council chambers at City Hall.

There is broad support for a wellness facility in Indianola and a growing population that desires such a facility. Attracting investors to develop real estate depends upon a vibrant economy and high quality of life for residents. There are entities desiring to locate and expand in the greater Indianola area that value individual wellness and recreational opportunities for all age groups.

As the size and present location of our current indoor aquatic facilities inhibits public use, student use and educational opportunities, we have a need to enhance our facilities to fit the needs of our students and the public. Having a publicly operated facility, either by a nonprofit or local government, with ongoing operating costs primarily supported by membership dues would be an economic asset to our community.

In planning for a facility, the committee would like to identify issues and seek new information on facility amenities typical for a community the size of Indianola and those desired by our residents. Whether we're talking gym space, a pool area for physical therapy and rehabilitation or exercise areas, the committee wants to develop what you want.

By engaging the city of Indianola, the county, Simpson College, the Indianola Community Schools and the citizens of our community, the committee will work with all stakeholders and potential partners that could build and operate such a facility. Whether you agree, disagree or just want more information, this group wants to know, "Indianola, what do you want?"

I truly believe that these two different foundations, The Indianola Community Youth Foundation and the Indianola Community Foundation each play a role in filling the missing pieces that our community needs for its youth, its adults and our city's future and I am putting my support behind both!