

The official newsletter of the Community Foundation of Dunn County



Jeans & Jewels Breaks Records Across the Board



What a night! Whether you sponsored, volunteered, donated an item, bought a ticket, or simply showed up ready to support your community, you helped make this year's Jeans & Jewels Gala our most successful one yet. Thank you!

We set new records in every single category: sponsorships, ticket sales, dessert dash, silent auction, live auction, and raffles. Your generosity didn't just meet expectations; it pushed them to new heights.

This year also introduced something special: our "Be a GEM" packages. This new initiative added \$3,000 to our Common Good Fund while also providing needed supplies and support to six local nonprofit organizations. It was philanthropy with immediate impact and a long-term ripple effect, which is what the Foundation is all about! (Read more about the GEM packages inside.)

Most importantly, the room felt like community; neighbors lifting up neighbors, celebrating local good, and investing in the future of Dunn County. Thank you for believing in this work and for making it a night to remember. A special thank you goes out to our Platinum and Silver sponsors!



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— GROUP, LLC —



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MENOMONIE



JIM & LORI
LEWIS

'BE A G.E.M.' DELIVERIES



The Donors: Diane Brown, Sue Brown, Judy Foust, Anne Gainey, Alison Glapa, Deb Hyde, Irene Smith, and Sue Thibado, members of a 22-year-old book club honoring their friend Judy Sawin.

The Nonprofit: Arbor Place, Inc. Women & Children's Treatment Center

The Items: Children's books and art supplies

The Sponsors: Michaela Gifford; Elizabeth Serratore & John Lawson

This special GEM package helps create moments of comfort and connection for children staying with their mothers in Arbor Place's new Women and Children's unit. The books and art supplies provide a sense of normalcy, creativity, and warmth as families navigate their time together in treatment.



The Donors: The Menomonie Court Cougars, a women's pickleball group, in honor of their team and shared commitment to community

The Nonprofit: Sleep in Heavenly Peace

The Items: Bedding essentials for local children receiving new beds

The Sponsors: Kari Loomis; Dale & Cindy Quilling; Terry & Elizabeth Witt; Jim & Patti Walker; Kyle Nielsen



By choosing Sleep in Heavenly Peace, the Court Cougars helped ensure more children in Dunn County had a warm, safe place to sleep. The Dunn County chapter has delivered over 300 fully furnished beds since 2021 and this package adds comfort and dignity to the next families they reach.



The Donors: The Pink Ladies, in loving memory of Cindy Paulson

The Nonprofit: Dunn County Historical Society

The Items: Sewing, design, and STEM supplies (including Magna Tiles)

The Sponsors: Bill & Jane Butsic; Elizabeth Serratore & John Lawson



Created in memory of beloved educator Cindy Paulson, this package brings hands-on creativity to students exploring sewing, design, and STEM. These tools connect history, technology, and imagination; helping learners build skills and confidence.



The Donors: David Chung, in memory of his wife, Barbara Chung

The Nonprofit: The Neighbors of Dunn County

The Items: Snacks, art supplies, Christmas ornaments and Bingo prizes

The Sponsors: Bob Friese; Kurt Larson; Doug Larson

This cheerful GEM package delivered treats and activities to brighten the days of residents at The Neighbors of Dunn County. The items brought simple joys: snacks to share, art supplies to spark creativity, and BINGO prizes to enhance fun and connection.



The Neighbors
of Dunn County



The Donors: Pat Mikesell in honor of her husband Ron Mikesell

The Nonprofit: Stepping Stones of Dunn County/Cairn House

The Items: "Welcome Home" baskets filled with practical household essentials for residents moving into new housing

The Sponsors: Dale & Cindy Quilling; Linda Lenz

In memory of her husband Ron, a longtime Menomonie resident, restaurant owner, and proud MHS football supporter, Pat Mikesell assembled 20 "Welcome Home" baskets to help shelter residents transition into new apartments. Stepping Stones' shelters support 250-300 people each year, and these baskets provide a warm, practical start for individuals and families as they move into homes of their own.



The Donor: Dianna Fiergola, Mainstream Boutique-Menomonie

The Nonprofit: Boys & Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley

The Items: Hygiene products, toiletries, and clothing for Menomonie's Care Closet

The Sponsors: Kari Loomis; Terry & Elizabeth Witt; Jon & Rochelle Kroening; Marilyn Fanetti

Inspired by her parents' and brother's legacy of generosity and community spirit, Dianna Fiergola provided essential items to help keep the Boys & Girls Club's Care Closet stocked. The Care Closet offers students and families access to hygiene items and clothing when they need them most.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE GREATER CHIPPEWA VALLEY



YEAR END GIVING

A Trio of Tips for Year End Giving

- **Give appreciated stock.** Consider donating long-term appreciated assets to take advantage of charitable deductions and avoid capital gains. This remains one of the most tax-effective ways to give.
- **Use (or start) a donor-advised fund.** Bundling contributions into a DAF can help you maximize itemized deductions in high-tax years and support nonprofit organizations over time.
- **Consider bunching your gifts.** If you itemize, you can combine several years of charitable contributions into 2025 to overcome the 0.5% floor and then use the higher standard deduction in 2026. This strategy allows you to maximize your tax benefit in high-giving years and still support nonprofits over time.

We're here to help you navigate your charitable planning with ease and confidence. Reach out anytime, you never have to wait until year-end to start the conversation.

Your IRA is a force for good

More than 40% of Americans own an IRA, and for many, it's one of their largest assets. That's why **IRAs can play such a meaningful role in charitable planning.** One of the easiest ways to create a future forever gift is to update your IRA beneficiary form and name your fund at the Community Foundation for all or part of the account. It's simple, tax-efficient, and allows you to shape a long-term legacy. Your children can even serve as advisors to the fund, or you can direct the Foundation to support the community's greatest needs.

Why does this matter? Because IRA assets left to charity avoid both estate and income taxes - unlike IRAs inherited by children, who must pay income tax on the distributions. This is also a good reminder to review all your beneficiary forms regularly. They may look small, but they carry real weight in an estate plan.

And if you're 70½ or older, you can make **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)** of up to \$110,000 per spouse, per year, directly from your IRA to eligible charities, including designated or field-of-interest funds at the Community Foundation. QCDs are not taxed and count toward your Required Minimum Distributions.

The bottom line: Your IRA can be one of the most effective ways to support the causes you care about - both today and long into the future.

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30 WAYS DUNN COUNTY IS BETTER BECAUSE OF YOU

HEALTH & WELLNESS

1

Dignity by Design: Donor Advised Fundholders stepped up for the West CAP Food Pantry in Boyceville. Their grants replaced worn, mismatched carts with new, sturdy, matching ones. This upgrade will help restore dignity for clients, create a more welcoming experience, and improve daily operations for staff and volunteers serving hundreds of families.



Double the Good: A grant from the Healthy Futures Fund is helping expand the Market Match program at the Menomonie Farmers Market; making fresh, local produce more affordable for families using food assistance benefits. By doubling the value of these dollars, we are helping neighbors stretch their budgets, support local growers, and bring home healthier food.

2

3

Healthy Smiles: A grant from the Healthy Futures Fund is helping the Free Clinic of the Greater Menomonie Area provide 10 preventive dental visits for low-income neighbors without coverage. Grant support makes it possible for patients to receive essential cleanings and exams preventing pain and improving health.



Restoring the Land: A grant is helping the Dunn County Historical Society restore a long-degraded wetland on its property. By improving soil health, creating natural buffers, and preparing the land for reseeded, this project will support wildlife, protect water quality, and open new educational opportunities. The grant was made possible by Paul Horvath and Megan Bayrd through their Building Healthy Communities Fund.

4

5

Breaking Barriers: A grant from the Healthy Futures Fund is supporting *Breaking it Down: System Silos and Mental Health Stigma*, an effort to help Dunn County residents navigate mental health resources with more clarity and confidence. By bringing providers, families, and community partners together, this project is working to reduce stigma, improve access, and create a more connected system of care.

6

Changing More Than Diapers: Diapers aren't covered by food stamps or WIC, yet they're one of the biggest expenses for families with an infant, costing nearly \$70 a month. That's why 1 in 3 moms report cutting back on food, heat, or other basics just to keep their babies dry. With our support the United Way St. Croix and Red Cedar Valleys launched the Dunn County Diaper Bank providing free diapers through partners like Stepping Stones. The result? Healthier babies, less stress, and stronger families.

Opening Childcare Access: A grant is helping the Menomonie East YMCA transform a storage room into a new Child Watch space, offering free on-site childcare for kids ages 6 weeks to 10 years. By removing a major barrier for busy parents, the project will boost member access, support family wellbeing, and make healthy living more attainable. The renovated space is expected to open in 2026.

7



EDUCATION & YOUTH

8 Capitol Connections: With help from a teacher mini-grant, Tiffany Creek Elementary's fourth graders headed to Madison to explore Wisconsin's Capitol and State Historical Museum - bringing their classroom civics lessons to life with an unforgettable hands-on experience.

9 Building Money Skills: A grant supported Junior Achievement's five-week financial literacy program at the River Heights Boys & Girls Club, reaching 30 students in a high-need school. Volunteers helped kids explore saving, spending, and basic entrepreneurship through hands-on lessons. The program gave students early confidence with money and sparked conversations about future careers.



10 Algebra in Action: Summit Academy educators Lisa Traxler and Raychel Bowman will launch "Algebra in Action," a project that helps 7th- and 8th-grade students connect math to real-world careers. With field trips to UW-Stout Engineering and Fulton's Workshop at the Dunn County Historical Society, students will explore how algebra shapes both modern industries and historical trades.

11 Supporting Growing Families: A grant is helping the Dunn County Playgroup serve about 60 families each week with free parenting support, early childhood resources, and a welcoming space to connect. What began with just five children now offers families a trusted place for guidance, community, and play—thanks to strong partners and generous donors.



12 Career Confidence: The Job Olympics, led by Jill Zydowsky, will bring together special education students for a hands-on day of career skill-building at UW-Stout. Students will practice real-world tasks - from interview techniques to grocery bagging - while volunteers coach, score, and encourage them.



13 Game Night Fun: A grant from the Barnard Family Charitable Fund helped the Menomonie Public Library launch its new Board Game Library of Things. Families can now check out games for three weeks at a time - making it easier to gather, play, and connect as the evenings get colder. Donor support is bringing more joy, learning, and togetherness into our community.

Only Offering Hope: With support from the Ohly Fund, student lunch debt for struggling families at the Boyceville School District was paid off. This generous gift lifted a quiet burden from those families and ensured those students could sit down to lunch without worry.



15

A pathway to college: Scholarships totaling over \$75,000 are helping students, from graduating seniors to nontraditional learners, achieve their educational goals.

FAMILIES & COMMUNITY



Spotlight on Access: A Women’s Giving Circle grant is helping the Menomonie Theater Guild expand accessibility and welcome more people into the arts. Sensory-friendly shows, free student access, and community events at the Mabel Tainter are breaking down barriers and bringing people together through shared theater experiences.

16

Celebrating Storytelling: A grant is helping the Red Cedar Film Festival continue growing Menomonie’s independent film scene. Founded in 2018, the festival brings filmmakers and movie-lovers together through screenings, panels, and community events that spark creativity and connection. The festival is working to expand its audience, attract more submissions, and build a vibrant regional home for independent cinema.

17

18 Opening Doors: Movin’ Out received a one-year grant to support first-time, low-income homebuyers in Dunn County through down payment assistance and homeownership guidance. Working with local partners, they offered workshops in Menomonie and Colfax that strengthened rural awareness.

19 Restoring Stability: A grant to WESTCAP helped 53 Dunn County residents facing homelessness, housing loss, or unsafe situations find stability. Through rental assistance and case management, 24 households received the support they needed to stay safely housed. One parent even moved from homelessness to steady work and reunification with their child - an example of the hope local giving makes possible.

20

Hope & Healing: Arbor Place has opened a new women and children’s unit - a first in the region - offering support to mothers working toward recovery while staying with their kids.

This effort removes a major barrier to treatment by keeping families together during a vulnerable time. With compassionate care, community backing, and safe housing, Arbor Place gives families a real chance at healing, stability, and a brighter tomorrow.



21 Investing in Hmong Leadership: A grant is helping the HWCC Advancement Center expand economic and leadership opportunities for Dunn County’s Hmong community. With bilingual workshops, entrepreneur support, and culturally relevant financial education, the project will strengthen local businesses and empower both youth and adults. Donor support is opening doors for families who often face rural isolation and limited resources—building confidence, connections, and community leadership from within.

22

Painting a Brighter Community: The Foundation is a Lunch Sponsor (\$5,000) for the Murals in Menomonie project. Murals are more than just paint. It’s about celebrating place, sparking conversation, and making Dunn County a more colorful, connected community. To donate to their fund, visit our website.

23

Behind the gift: Our Donor Impact Tour brought supporters face-to-face with the difference their giving makes. With stops at local nonprofits, ranging from food security to the arts, donors saw how their contributions are transforming lives. It was a powerful reminder that local giving drives real change.

PHILANTHROPY



30th Anniversary Wrap-up: This year, we celebrated the Foundation's 30th Anniversary by shining a spotlight on what makes Dunn County strong: our nonprofits and the people who believe in them. We launched new endowment partnerships, raised \$50,000 in one unforgettable night, and opened doors for community impact tours. It was a year of connection and momentum, and we're excited to carry that energy forward into the next 30 years.

\$5k Nonprofit Endowment Match: We're excited to announce that we have officially approved 15 new nonprofit endowment funds through our \$5k match initiative! A few partners are still raising their initial \$5,000, and you can visit our website to discover which nonprofits are participating and how you can help them reach the finish line.



25

26

Nonprofit Directory: We have been hard at work this year to bring you a complete nonprofit directory! This resource connects you with the organizations shaping our community for the better. You'll find nonprofit profiles with missions, service areas, and contact details, making it easy to explore causes that match your passions and see how local organizations are making a real difference.



Best Jeans & Jewels Ever!

Our annual Jeans & Jewels Gala brought 300 guests together for an evening of community and celebration, raising more than \$115,000 to support the Foundation's daily operations and long-term mission. Highlights included raffles, auctions, and our most successful Dessert Dash ever, which brought in over \$31,000.

Be a GEM: This year's Jeans & Jewels introduced a new way of giving back with our "Be a GEM" initiative, inviting donors to sponsor \$500 of essential items for local nonprofits. Guests could give in honor or memory of someone special, and the Foundation delivered each package after the event. In total, the initiative provided more than \$3,000 in goods to nonprofits across Dunn County. It also generated an additional \$3,000 for our Common Good Fund, expanding the reach of community generosity even further.

27 & 28

A Powerful Boost for Nonprofits: We were thrilled to debut Philanthropy Unplugged, a new event that delivered \$50,000 in extra support to five local nonprofits. With 50 tickets sold at \$1,000 each, attendees had the chance to vote for their favorite organization, and in the end, every eligible nonprofit received funding. Anonymous donors surprised the room and provided additional funding to the 3rd, 4th and 5th place finalists, bringing the total raised to \$61,500! It was an unforgettable night of community generosity in action.



29

30

Invest in the Next 30 Years: December marks end-of-year giving for Community Foundations across the country, and this year we're celebrating with a special \$30,000 match for our own endowment. We're inviting 30 people, couples, or companies to each contribute \$1,000, and we'll match every gift to strengthen our long-term impact. Visit our website to learn more or make your donation.

2025: A LOOK BACK



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA

CFDC Board Chair Bill Butsic shares a smile with fundholder Marni Waznik during the Annual Luncheon at Tanglewood Greens in May.



FEEL THE LOVE

A heartfelt moment captured between fundholders Linda Rundle (left) and Megan Bayrd during the Legacy Picnic in June at the Legacy Barn.



CELEBRATION TIME

Confetti poppers fill the air as Stepping Stones of Dunn County was announced as the \$30,000 winner at Philanthropy Unplugged in July at Lucette Brewing Company. Vice Chair Brad Waznik and former board member Judy Foust presented the award to Brit Blankenheim, Community Connections Manager at Stepping Stones.



BIDDING WAR

Nothing like a little friendly competition! Clark Yolitz and his wife Jodi Carr enjoying the moment during a lively bidding war with friend Tim Auth during the Jeans & Jewels live auction.



TOGETHER IN GRATITUDE

Longtime friends Lori Lewis (left), Kim & Jerry Porter, and Kay Naatz sharing big smiles during the Evening of Gratitude at The Barn at Copper Creek in September.

GENERATIONS OF GIVING

Fundholders Mitch & Lynn Evenson (left) share smiles with fundholders & legacy members Tim and Karen Evenson at the Evening of Gratitude.



CELEBRATING SERVICE

Kris Korpela (middle) with CFDC Executive Director Georgina Tegart (left) and former board member Sue Traxler, is honored with flowers at the Women's Giving Circle Fall Gala in October as she concludes her 3-year term as WGC President and passes leadership to Pat Reisinger.

CARRIED AWAY

Raffle winners Jeremy and Erin Untz carry two kayaks out of the UW-Stout Memorial Student Center after winning one of six Golden Ticket prizes at Jeans & Jewels.



NEWS & NOTES

February Grant Application Deadline & Grant Writing 101 Workshop

Dunn County nonprofits, government entities, and community groups are invited to apply for Community Impact Grants supporting areas such as health, education, arts, environment, basic needs, and more. Applications are due Sunday, February 1, 2026, by 5 PM. Details and the online application can be found at cfdunncounty.org/grants. Questions? Contact Ray Pagenkopf at rpagenkopf@cfdunncounty.org

Join us for Grant Writing 101! We will be hosting a free Grant Writing 101 workshop on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 3 PM at the Menomonie Market Food Co-op. Local nonprofits and public agencies are invited to learn practical tips for writing stronger grant applications, just in time for the February 1st submission deadline. All are welcome!

Visit cfdunncounty.org/grants-feb2026

Honor a Loved One with a Memorial Brick

Honor a veteran with a personalized brick at the Dunn County Veterans Memorial. The Community Foundation is accepting brick orders now, with each brick available for a \$250 donation and customizable with up to 57 characters. Orders must be received by February 1, 2026, and new bricks will be dedicated at the Flag Day Ceremony on June 14, 2026. To request an order form or learn more, contact Liz Forster at lforster@cfdunncounty.org or call 715-232-8019.



DONATE NOW online at <https://cfdunncounty.fcsuite.com/erp/donate> or by mail using the tear-off.



I/We want to support the Community Foundation of Dunn County in an effort to enhance lives in Dunn County.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone number: _____

I wish to remain anonymous (your name will not be listed in our publications)

Please select the amount of your tax-deductible gift.

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Please direct my donation to:

Area of greatest need Friends of the Foundation Fund

A specific fund or cause: _____

THIS GIFT IS in memory of: in honor of: _____

Please make checks payable to the Community Foundation of Dunn County.

THANK YOU!

All contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.



800 Wilson Ave, Suite 235
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The Community Foundation of Dunn County supports **H.R. 2891**, which would allow IRA rollovers into donor-advised funds and expand charitable giving nationwide. Our donor-advised funds already help strengthen Dunn County, this year supporting **87 nonprofits** with over **\$159,990 in grants**. H.R. 2891 would give donors more flexibility while helping local nonprofits do even more.

THE COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

The Official Newsletter of the Community Foundation of Dunn County



Hoof Beat
Therapeutic
Healing Center



Make more...

wellness

youth programming

safety

housing

accessibility

healthy choices

...possible
through the power of your
collective giving.