

Incouraging Action

Welcome to our donor update, informing you of a variety of ways you can make an impact for our community's current needs. You may suggest grants through your donor advised fund, or you may also provide additional contributions to Incourage for any of the following opportunities you would like to support, with the ability to do so anonymously if desired.

We are truly stronger together and appreciate your ongoing support.



Photo by Patrick McGrath

Please consider supporting the following opportunities:



Materials Girls

The purpose of the Material Girls Quilting Club of Wisconsin Rapids, serving the south Wood County area, is to promote the art of quilts and quilt-making in Central Wisconsin, to share ideas, to develop skills, to provide educational opportunities to its members, and to promote and encourage appreciation of quilts and quilt making in the community through yearly service projects.

One of the service projects the Club supports is **"Quilts of Valor"**. These beautiful quilts are customized and awarded to Service Members and Veterans touched by war to honor their branch, gender and any special details of their service. Typically, our local club creates and presents approximately 40 hand made quilts per year. That number varies

based upon nominations and awards assigned to the Material Girls by the state Quilts of Valor organization. The historical average supply cost is approximately \$50 per quilt. Several quilters are involved in making each quilt, contributing a combination of more than 40 hours per quilt. The dedication of this group is obvious; it is a true gift of love. With supply costs rising, the Material Girls anticipate that \$4,950 is needed to support Quilts of Valor supplies this year. To date, \$4,000 has been provided through multiple grant funds from Incourage. Additional support is needed to keep the program going forward now and in the future.



See photo inset note below

Additional local service projects include: **Christmas stockings** for local church groups, the veterans hospital at King, and other service organizations which in turn stuff them for families in need; **Reversible placemats** made for multi-season use for the hospital's Meals on Wheels program; **Palliative care quilts** for patients at Aspirus in Wisconsin Rapids.

Photo inset note: The Hero's Café Facebook page posted the inset photo on April 28, 2021. Twelve local veterans, representing all conflicts from the Korean War, Vietnam, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Afghanistan and Iraq, were gifted a Quilt of Valor during the Wisconsin Rapids Heros Café held at the Elks Club.



Stuff the Bus/Stuff the Desk

Stuff the School Bus is a collaborative effort among several local nonprofit, government and school agencies where donations of school supplies are collected during an event held at Lunch By the River. The donations are later distributed to local students in need during the Stuff the Desk event. All

families with a financial need are eligible.

Stuff the Bus has been serving students in our community for over 10 years. In 2021, more than 650 students were served. This year, the Committee anticipates serving 850-900 students. This service wouldn't be possible without the generosity from our residents, local businesses, and service organizations, as well as grant funding to help offset shortages.



Wisconsin Rapids Boxing Club

The Wisconsin Rapids Boxing Club, serving the Tri-City area for the past 46 years, is in the process of relocating to the Port Edwards YMCA. Currently located at an abandoned building in Nekoosa, this move will provide the boxers and coaches a safe, warm, and well-lit place to practice.

In early 2019, New York Times reporter James Card and photographer Lauren Justice travelled to our community for a feature article. "A Rural Boxing Gym Puts Up a Fight" was published March 7, 2019 in The New York Times. The inset photo was one of several included in the article. This article created renewed interest in the Club. In fact, they have seen such an influx of youth that additional sessions are being offered in order to accommodate all the youth.



The Boxing Club has trained over 1,500 individuals throughout the years, including 45 State Champions and 19 Mid-West Champions. The program is unique as they include kids who are too small or do not have the financial resources to play high school sports. There are many programs in our community designed to serve disadvantaged children, but after they reach 13-14 years old, many are looking for something else to try. The Club offers guidance and mentoring, and they become a valued member of the boxing community. Lifelong friendships are formed and reported to be maintained over time and across long distances. The Club consists of both female and male boxers, from 8-40 years old, and come from different backgrounds, races, family structures, and economic levels. To make the program affordable and accessible to all, yearly dues are \$20.

The Legacy Foundation of Central Wisconsin is currently offering a \$1:\$1 matching opportunity up to \$25,000. \$5,000 has been raised to date, with an additional \$5,000 pledged. Funds raised will be used to replace the homemade ring, worn out headgear and gloves, and provide for long-term needs of the program which mentors youth through a boxing program that emphasizes respect, integrity, discipline, and sportsmanship, so they may have the tools to succeed inside and outside of the ring. Should you be interested, there is an opportunity to recognize grants and personal donations at various levels of giving.

Read "A Rural Boxing Gym Puts Up a Fight", The New York Times, By James Card and Photographs by Lauren Justice, March 7, 2019 at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/07/sports/wisconsin-rapids-boxing-club.html>.



Friends of Rapids Music

Planning is in full swing for FRM 2022. This all-day music festival will be held at Robinson Park in Wisconsin Rapids on September 10. It is open to the general public and includes bands from many different genres including acoustic, country, jazz, polka, blues, rock, dance variety, and much more.

Seeking to draw in more families and a diverse cross-section of our community, in addition to featuring music across all genres, the 2021 festival included Hmong and Native American performers and a variety of children's activities. With attendance in the range of 700 to 1,000 the festival is an economic driver and a way to bring musicians together to share the healing power of music with people from all walks of life in our community. There really is something for everyone! Learn more at www.frmgroup.org.



Amateur Radio Group

Thanks to previous donations of support received in 2021, the Heart of Wisconsin Amateur Radio Group was able to purchase an unfinished enclosed 16-foot trailer to use as a transportable communications center. Due to increased pricing from vendors as a result of the pandemic, and to make the trailer fully functional for its intended purpose, additional donations are being requested to purchase and install electrical, windows, flooring, air

conditioning/heat, insulation, interior LED lighting, a fiberglass wall and a ceiling liner.

In the event of a disaster, the organization, comprised of trained and licensed volunteer amateur radio operators, provides emergency communication and support for agencies such as local law enforcement, the National Weather Service, United Way, American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. The new trailer, when outfitted with equipment, will house amateur radio communications equipment and antennas, and be used when the group is called upon to participate in emergency (actual or practice) and public service events in Wood, Adams and surrounding counties. It will also serve as an educational and outreach site as a means to promote amateur radio and provide STEM education.

Total cost needed to equip the trailer is \$4,000; \$1,000 has been raised. Learn more at www.howarg.org.

incourage™ Friends of Incourage

All gifts to the "Friends of Incourage Fund" support Incourage's ongoing community-building work and are used to nimbly and flexibly support these community needs as they are identified. With the economies of scale made possible by our donors who collectively invest in the future of our community, Incourage professionally manages and invests these assets to make a lasting impact on the future of south Wood County, a place we all call home. Gifts of all size are appreciated, and all friends will be recognized on the Incourage website, posted publicly at the Incourage office, and may also be recognized through other media. Friends of Incourage include any dollar amount, Founding Friends are partners who make contributions of \$5,000 or more; be a Friend and become a Founding Friend over time. If you appreciate the work that we are doing, your support, no matter the amount, helps Incourage to do more. Learn more at www.incouragecf.org.



Photo courtesy of HAC FB event

Hmong American Center

To better serve Wood County's Southeast Asian residents, the Hmong American Center (HAC) is opening a branch office in Wisconsin Rapids. They will be located at 2821 8th St S, Ste #5; grand opening is April 17 at 2pm.

The Hmong American Center engages in economic, social and multi-cultural development, serving as an educational and resource center for its members and surrounding communities through leadership, cooperation and collaboration. Programs and services include: preserving their heritage through cultural advocacy, building relationships between law enforcement and the Southeast Asian community, providing educational support to help prepare future generations for career opportunities including public service careers, assisting aging adults with tax preparation, helping to bridge the gap for residents facing food insecurity, and providing translation services.

Financial support helps HAC provide outreach, programs and services, and supports the organization's operating needs, including maintaining a local branch office. Learn more at www.hmongamericancenter.org.



Family Center

The Family Center is requesting support for three to four staff members to attend "A Window Between Worlds Art Workshop Facilitator Training". This two-day immersive virtual training focuses on trauma-informed care, intersectionality, cultural responsiveness, and oppression as a form of trauma. Staff will learn how art can support healing through creative expression, with attendees receiving the materials necessary to train other staff members,

including offering an internal only train-the-trainer component. Future staff will be able to receive training by the Family Center facilitators to help the program's long-term sustainability. The cost of the workshop is \$1,500 per person; \$6,000 for four staff members to attend. Additionally, internal staff training will cost \$50 per staff member for supplies and materials. The number of internal staff trained over time will evolve. We anticipate the program will have a long-lasting positive impact on the staff and families they serve. Learn more about The Family Center at www.familyctr.org.



Central Wisconsin Cultural Center

The Cultural Center's Phase 2 Patio Project will bring more opportunities for live entertainment to their outdoor stage, showcase local sculpture artists in the Art Park, and increase green space on 8th Street with additional landscaping. \$50,000 from their previous fundraising campaign is allocated to the project. Based upon the latest project quote, \$85,000 is still needed.

The Cultural Center is also requesting support to help create an internal "scholarship fund" to subsidize residents who would like to take classes. Some residents have shared with staff that they are interested but cannot afford them. This type of internal fund would help students take classes at a greatly reduced fee. Learn more about CWCC at www.culturalcenterarts.com.



Boy Scouts of America – Samoset Council

The Samoset Council is seeking \$5,000 to provide scholarship funds for high school youth in the Wisconsin Rapids area to attend a seven-day National Youth Leadership Training in Rhinelander. \$2,500 would provide a 50% camp fee scholarship for eight local youth this summer and next summer 2023.

National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) is an intensive, week-long camp for upper rank Scouts, BSA and Venturers. Each participant works through a series of challenges with the mentoring of highly skilled youth staff members. Participants are equipped with the basic skills necessary to become leaders in their units. The skills learned at NYLT carry over into their schools, communities, and future careers.

NYLT participants are typically identified by their Troop as good candidates for leadership training because they are moving into a leadership position within the group. Each Troop from Wisconsin Rapids, Nekoosa, Port Edwards, Adams Friendship, Pittsville, and Rudolph typically sends two youth from their unit to attend camp. If there is funding available, additional youth may be able to attend, particularly those that would benefit from receiving a camp fee subsidy. NYLT provides a unique leadership training opportunity for youth. This funding would open the National Youth Leadership Training to all families regardless of their financial situation. The training teaches the importance of inclusivity and teamwork that the participating youth can teach to others. All youth are welcome to participate in this training regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion. BSA and the Samoset Council are open to all children and young adults.



Unrestricted Funds

Incourage's vision is a community that works well for all. As we work with you toward this vision, we strive to meet the ever-changing needs of the south Wood County area one day at a time, and always with a desire to create a better community for generations to come. We do this in part by funding creative resident-led community-building ideas, encouraging connections and collaboration among residents and organizations along the way. When donors make contributions that can be used at the discretion of Incourage, often called unrestricted, we are then able to support community-building suggestions brought to our attention by people like you. Gifts to our unrestricted "Community Impact Fund" are used to nimbly and flexibly support these community needs as they arise or are identified. If you are interested in supporting grant-making and other activities in our community, your contribution, no matter the amount, helps Incourage to do more. Learn more at www.incouragecf.org.

We value and appreciate your partnership and support.

**Contact Incourage to discuss these opportunities or make additional contributions:
715.423.3863 or hello@incouragecf.org.**