

Community Foundation of Chippewa County

Connecting People Who Care with Causes That Matter

By Linda Bergen

As a new member of the board of directors of the Community Foundation of Chippewa County, I'm excited to be a part of an organization that cares about community and is committed to funding projects in our local communities of Cornell and Lake Holcombe as well as all of Chippewa County. I'm so proud of what this group is accomplishing that I'd like to share a little of what the Foundation is, the ways that we benefit from the Community Foundation, and also how you may choose to be a part of that "community."

To paraphrase from the Community Foundation's annual report: "Community, Passion, and Commitment" are just a few of the words used to describe the ideals that are important to those who work with the Community Foundation of Chippewa County. They are committed to successfully carrying out their philanthropic goals or to honoring the memory of someone in a permanent, meaningful way. That sense of community and those ideals of honoring the past while preserving the future brought about the establishment of the Community Foundation of Chippewa County in 2001 by a group of people who were committed to those goals. Fast forward to 2014 and according to the organization's annual report (September 2013), assets under management now exceed \$10 million, 175 funds have been established, and cumulatively, more than \$3.6 million has been distributed back into our Chippewa County communities in the form of grants and distributions.

The Community Foundation of Chippewa County is not a professional fundraiser. Instead it offers support and opportunities for connecting "people who care"

with "causes that matter." Those who want to share their passion can establish a fund to promote their interests and have the Community Foundation provide expertise, support, and management. It is an organization of utmost integrity and high standards.

The benefits to our local communities have been many, and without the generosity of the Foundation and its donor funds, many important organizations and programs would not be able to function or even exist. Some of the ways Cadott, Cornell, and Lake Holcombe will benefit this year or have benefited in the past from pro-

grams under the auspices of the Community Foundation include the following examples:

Chippewa Land Conservancy—Brunet Island Krank Wildlife Area Nature Preserve will receive funding for signs and tools to be purchased for ongoing maintenance of the 597-acre nature preserve. The preserve will be open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking, snow shoeing, bird watching, and cross country skiing. This was funded by the Fred R. Bowe Memorial

Endowment Fund and Warren & Virginia Wermund Endowment Fund.

Communities in Education—Sobering Truth was an excellent program that reached out to students, parents, and community in Cornell and Lake Holcombe to address the prevalent issues of underage drinking and parents hosting parties while highlighting real-world consequences. Andrea Smith, director of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers of Cornell and Lake Holcombe stated that "The Community Foundation of Chippewa County recognizes that smaller communities such as Cornell and Lake Holcombe need to be able to obtain funding for their worthwhile programs as well as bigger cities. To that end,



Lake Holcombe student Austin Fisk planes lumber that was purchased by the Dennis and Jeanne Boisvert Family Endowment Fund. This fund provides money for different projects in the Lake Holcombe School District.

the Foundation has fulfilled that need and I commend them for that.” Sobering Truth was partially funded by the Sandra and Roger Robarge Family Endowment Fund and Unrestricted Funds of the Foundation.

The Lake Holcombe School District was able to purchase a camera for yearbook photos, wood for the Wood Shop Technology class, college visitation trips for seniors, funds for Family and Consumer Education, new library books geared for high school students, and more thanks to the generosity of The Dennis and Jeanne Boisvert Family Endowment Fund.

Programs involving the youth of Lake Holcombe, both inside and outside the school, were supported by grants from The Youth of Lake Holcombe Endowment Fund. For example, this year the Lake Holcombe Girl Scout Troop 3060 received an award to send girls to camp who could not otherwise afford to attend.

Other organizations not specific to our local area, but that received support benefiting members of our communities, include the Chippewa County Historical Society, Family Support Center, and The Open Door Clinic, to name a few.

In addition to some of the examples cited above, the Northwestern Bank Mini Grant Fund (which is funded by Northwestern Bank and administered by the Foundation) has provided many opportunities that support our local educators. Every fall elementary through middle school teachers in Chippewa County are encouraged to submit proposals for their “mini grants” through a short application process. A few examples will show just what “mini” can accomplish: This year a \$250 grant will be awarded to Cornell Middle School—Building a Well Rounded Library. This grant will allow the library to revamp its collection of books geared toward middle school students, updating classics as well as an increasing variety.

Lake Holcombe School—The Wonderful Literary World of Eric Carle received a \$250 grant to purchase books and supplies for a library celebration held last February that “promoted family reading, children’s literature, and promoted school libraries through family involvement,” shared Patrick Talbot, the elementary teacher who was responsible for writing the grant.

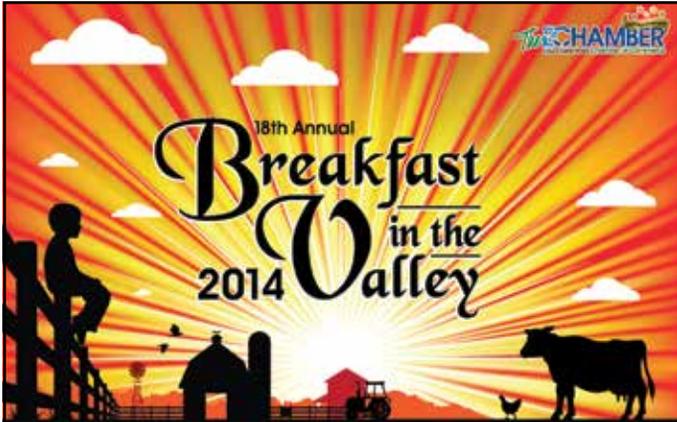
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“The Community Foundation of Chippewa County is the ‘best kept secret in the county’ ...”

— Bruce Anderson,
Area PRIDE Committee



Students from the Cornell Middle School hold books purchased with a Northwestern Bank mini grant the school received.



Breakfast in the Valley Celebrates 18th Annual Event

Agriculture, business, and the general public will come together at the 18th Annual Breakfast in the Valley on Friday, June 13, 2014. Scrambled eggs with ham, cheese and mushrooms, muffins, cheese, cheese curds, bananas, milk, orange juice, coffee, and the traditional June Dairy Breakfast treat of corn flakes with Culver's custard and strawberries will be served from 5 a.m. until 10 a.m. at the Eau Claire County Exposition Center.

Breakfast in the Valley is hosted by the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by more than 80 businesses. Over 300 volunteers from area businesses will prepare and serve the breakfast. Chippewa Valley dignitaries and elected officials will be among those helping to serve.

Eggs will be cooked in two 4-foot skillets designed and built by students at Chippewa Valley Technical College. Each skillet holds 250 eggs at one time, cooked by a crew of volunteers.

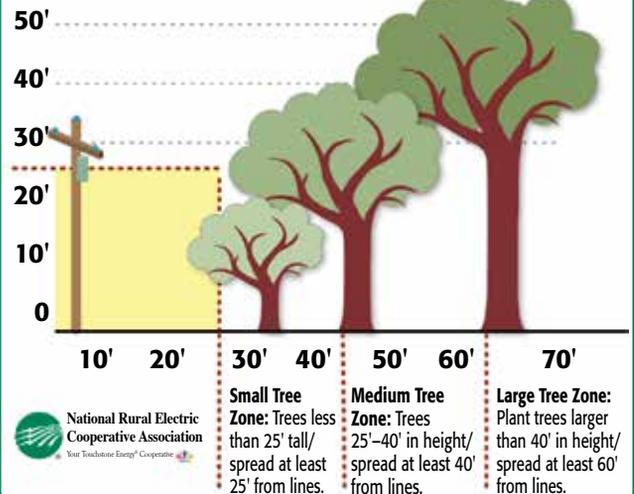
In addition, there will be agricultural product displays, business displays, a petting zoo, door prize drawings, milk-drinking contests at 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. with local celebrities, antique tractors, friend of agriculture award, conservation awards, and a visit from the newly crowned 67th Alice in Dairyland. The Stanek and Volbrecht farm families will be at the breakfast showcasing information on their farms. The first 2,700 people will receive a commemorative coffee mug compliments of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative.

Cost is \$6 per adult or \$2 for children 3–12; 2 and under are free. Tickets are only available at the door. For more information, contact the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce at (715) 834-1204. ■

Landscaping Around Electricity

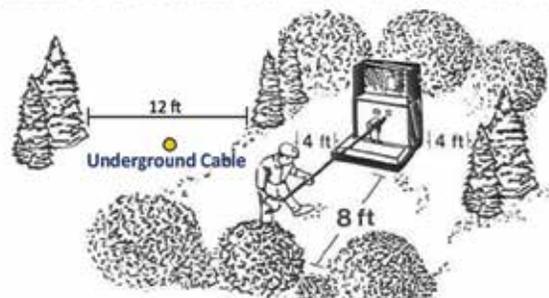
As you plan your tree and landscape plantings, consider that trees and shrubs need space to grow both above and below ground. Reduce fire hazards, power outages, and the need for frequent pruning with proper selection and planting of trees near utilities. Please refer to this tree planting guide when you decide to plant trees this season. Also, remember to call Diggers Hotline (dial 811) at least 72 hours before you begin any digging.

Tree Planting Guide



Underground Planting Guide

To provide space for operating this device, please keep shrubs, plants, and structures 8 feet from the front and 4 feet from the other sides.



Call before you dig: 811 or 800-242-8511

Community Foundation

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The Community Foundation also collaborates with community organizations to help with fund management and investment services if needed through pass-through funds. Two such organizations in our area taking advantage of the Foundation's expertise are the Cornell Stacker Pass-Through Fund and the Lake Holcombe Area PRIDE Committee Pass-Through Fund. Bruce Anderson, one of the integral members of the Lake Holcombe Area PRIDE Committee, recalls not knowing much about the Foundation when the PRIDE Committee got started but has nothing but praise for the tremendous help they have received from the Foundation.

"We knew what we needed to do for fundraisers and what we needed the money for, but we didn't know the ins and outs from a legal aspect and also how to manage the money we were raising," he said. "The Foundation and Melinda Haun, the Foundation's executive director, have been instrumental in providing guidance for our funds as well as dispersing funds when we needed them to complete a project." Bruce further stated, "The Community Foundation of Chippewa County is the 'best kept secret in the county,' and it's a shame more people aren't aware of all the good they do!"

Seedling Funds are another way that allows donors (or charitable and other tax-exempt organizations) to build a named fund now, and then bring it to the endowed level over time with either lifetime or estate gifts. Creating a seedling fund is a great alternative for donors who want to gradually build their charitable assets while meeting their philanthropic goals. An example of a seedling fund established in our local area is the Brunet Island State Park Seedling Fund. Through the generosity of Scott and Theresa Stai, a fund managed through the Community Foundation of Chippewa County will support Brunet Island State Park in Cornell for years to come. The newly established seedling fund—a type of fund that will convert to an endowment fund once sufficient funding has been received—can now accept donations from the public to forever benefit the beautiful park and its visitors.

To keep a community strong, there have to be people that volunteer money, time, and talent.

— Tom Kell, former president of Kell Container and current co-owner of River Bend Vineyard and Winery

The Community Foundation provides anyone with a simple, effective, and also highly personal means to give back to their community. It provides the tools for anyone to reach their charitable goals and is a means of leaving your "legacy forever." If you have a passion for giving back to your community and are interested in exploring the possibility of setting up a fund in your name or the name of a loved one, or want to donate to one of the seedling funds, you can contact Melinda Haun, executive director of the Community Foundation of Chippewa County. Melinda can provide you with information and assistance in helping to establish your own individual fund. She is also willing to meet with anyone interested in the Community Foundation and will do so with utmost confidentiality. Melinda Haun can be reached at (715) 723-8125. For more information, you can check out the Foundation's web page, yourlegacyforever.org.

If this is the first you've ever heard of the Community Foundation of Chippewa County, you aren't alone. Five years ago I didn't know that the Community Foundation of Chippewa County existed. It wasn't until I received some grants for school that I learned what they were about. I continue to be in awe of and amazed by what they do. This article is "just the tip of the iceberg!" I'd like to end by quoting Chippewa Falls resident Tom Kell, former president of Kell Container and current co-owner of River Bend Vineyard and Winery: "There's nothing more important than giving back to a community. To keep a community strong, there have to be people that volunteer money, time, and talent. The Community Foundation is an excellent place to do that." ■

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