

# The Greater Cedarburg ... now and forever FOUNDATION

A Newsletter for the Friends of the Cedarburg Foundation

Forty-third Edition — Summer 2024

## Jill Hepburn Receives GCF Civic Award in Memory of James W. Coutts by Paul Hayes

On May 8, the Greater Cedarburg Foundation presented the 2024 GCF Civic Award in memory of James W. Coutts to Jill Hepburn. This award recognizes the vision, hard work, and leadership of Jill Hepburn which were instrumental in the opening of the Cedarburg Art Museum, one of our community's gems.

One summer day in 2012, Jill Hepburn and a friend, the late Patricia Ross, were having lunch across the street from the magnificent Jochen-Wittenberg mansion on Cedarburg's historic Washington Avenue, when they noticed that the real estate company that occupied the 1898 mansion was selling the building.

When the two luncheon partners crossed the street and peered into the windows of the mansion, Jill realized that she was looking at the future art museum that her husband Mal had for years envisioned to house and display the Wisconsin art he had accumulated as president of the former Ozaukee Bank. "Oh my goodness," she remembers thinking. "This should be the art museum Mal's always talking about."

The mansion was acquired by the Ozaukee Bank Gift to the Future Fund, a trust set up by Mal Hepburn. The trust also paid for 49 paintings by notable Wisconsin artists which the bank had accumulated. These became the core collection of the museum, to which were added the winning paintings of Cedarburg's annual plein air event that attracts 165 artists to the streets of Cedarburg every summer.

The mansion was in remarkably good shape in spite of having been in later years a boarding house and a commercial real estate office. Once



GCF Past President Joe Rintelman and Jill Hepburn  
Photo credit: Mark Justesen, News Graphic staff

purchased, Jill Hepburn took over the job of converting the building into a public space. Cedarburg was ready for such a resource, and large numbers of volunteers showed up to clean, polish and paint the interior, and restore the gardens outside.

Jill regularly appeared at the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and other organizations to describe her vision for the art museum, raise funds, and recruit volunteers. The Cedarburg Art Museum opened to the public during the 2013 Strawberry Festival. She ran the museum herself until she developed a job description, interviewed candidates, and hired a paid Executive Director. In 2014 Jill nominated the first Board of Directors for the museum; she then served as Board Chair for the next six years.

Since its launch, the museum has accumulated scores of new paintings and sculptures, sponsored children's programs and public

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## GCF Installs New President



Katie Pipkorn

At GCF's annual board meeting in July, we welcomed Katie Pipkorn as the new president of the Greater Cedarburg Foundation. Katie

replaces Joe Rintelman, who remains on the board as past president.

"I am honored to step into the role of president. I look forward to serving the Cedarburg community as my parents modeled for me my entire life," says Katie, whose father was slated to become the fourth GCF president before his unexpected passing in 2006. "I am flattered to follow in the footsteps of my dad, and I love being a part of such an amazing and generous community. As GCF president I will strive to preserve and enrich our cultural heritage, enhance our artistic and aesthetic experiences, and provide education and community service opportunities for all ages."

Katie is a seventh-generation Cedarburg resident and proud CHS alumnus. Katie graduated with honors from Washington University in St. Louis. She holds the highest actuarial credential, FCAS, and works as a property and casualty actuary at the global consulting firm, Milliman Inc. Katie and her husband Matt have lived in Cedarburg most of their lives and currently reside in the City of Cedarburg with their family. ■

# Thirteen Organizations Receive Grants from Greater Cedarburg Foundation

The Greater Cedarburg Foundation awarded \$114,300 to 13 area non-profit organizations as part of the 2024 annual grant cycle process.

"I am so grateful to live in a community where people care deeply about our history, the arts, education, and social programs. The generosity of GCF's donors helps keep Cedarburg an amazing place we can all be proud to be a part of. Thank you to the many donors who continue to make grants like these possible," said Katie Pipkorn, GCF President.

Organizations receiving 2024 grants include:

- **Advent Lutheran Church:** To help restore the 100-year-old "Good Shepherd" stained glass window fronting Washington Avenue
- **Advocates of Ozaukee:** To provide support for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- **Cedarburg Art Museum:** To upgrade the security system at the museum in order to protect assets and ensure the safety of employees, volunteers and guests
- **Cedarburg History Museum:** To stabilize and beautify the creekside area adjacent to the museum parking lot on Cedar Creek
- **Interfaith Caregivers of Ozaukee County:** To help purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to expand the transportation program for elderly and disabled clients
- **Ozaukee County Historical Society:** To purchase equipment to provide a climate-controlled environment for the collection and preservation of historical artifacts
- **Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department:** To support habitat restoration and provide public access at the undeveloped Covered Bridge County Park parcel on Cedar Creek
- **Ozaukee Family Services:** To build a "Book Nook," a little library that will be located onsite and open to the public, offering both children's books and resources for parents



*Front Row (left to right) Mary Ann Velnetske - Ozaukee County Historical Society, Melissa Wraalstad - Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts, Annie Johnson - Cedarburg Art Museum, Jen Gerber - Cedarburg Art Museum, Linda Oakes - Advent Lutheran Church, Dr. Michael Weber - Ozaukee Nonprofit Center, Andrea Simon - Cedarburg Art Museum, Sharon Cross - Riveredge Nature Center* *Back Row (Left to Right) Joe Rintelman - Past President, Greater Cedarburg Foundation, Barb Fischer - Advocates of Ozaukee, Joel Willems - Cedarburg History Museum, Jack Johnston - Town of Cedarburg, Mark Gierach - Ozaukee Food Alliance, Tim Schoonenberg - Ozaukee Nonprofit Center*

Photo credit: Mark Justesen, News Graphic staff

- **Ozaukee Nonprofit Center:** To enhance building security for the safety of the clients and staff of the 36 non-profit agencies that utilize space at the center
- **Riveredge Nature Center:** To support the restoration and increase accessibility of the Children's Garden, an important resource in its environmental education programming
- **Ozaukee Food Alliance:** To support capacity expansion for frozen food to accommodate increased donations of healthy fruits, vegetables, and proteins
- **Town of Cedarburg:** To purchase AEDs for youth recreation programming at the Korb Sports Complex and Orthopedic Hospital of Wisconsin (OHOW) Fields
- **Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts:** To help launch The Listening Project and Textile Library to document the stories of textile artists

## GRANT SPOTLIGHT: Protecting Wisconsin Art



The Cedarburg Art Museum houses more than 350 pieces of art from artists around the state of Wisconsin and welcomes more than 10,000 visitors each year. In addition to showcasing exhibitions and art collections, the Art Museum is a gathering place for

members of the community as they attend art classes, enjoy the summer beer garden, visit at Christmastime, attend talks from local professionals, and rent space for private events.

Ensuring the safety and security of both its assets and its people is imperative for the Cedarburg Art Museum. The Greater Cedarburg Foundation awarded the museum a grant to upgrade its security system. The grant will improve the quality of cameras using High

Definition technologies, replace keypads that operate the locking mechanism on entrance doors, and upgrade the software that integrates cameras, locks, and access codes for authorized personnel. The result of additional security will be increased safety for employees, volunteers, and guests, as well as enabling the museum to attract art from more and better sources who require increased security to display pieces from their collection.

"We are very fortunate to live in a community that works so hard to preserve its history. We appreciate all of the individuals, businesses, and organizations like the Greater Cedarburg Foundation that provide time and resources to help our museum thrive. This grant will help us protect our art and improve the safety of our staff, members, and guests," said Jen Gerber, Executive Director. ■

## Public Access and Habitat Restoration



Ozaukee County is home to a variety of multi-use trails, parks, and recreational opportunities that are managed by the Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department

with its 1,145 acres of parkland and natural areas. Located in the Town of Cedarburg adjacent to Cedar Creek, Covered Bridge County Park is a popular location for photography, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and picnicking. Other amenities at the park include a new open air pavilion with indoor bathrooms, an ADA pedestrian bridge over Cedar Creek, grills, and drinking water. In 2018, Ozaukee County acquired an additional 5.65-acre parcel west of Covered Bridge Road and formally added it to the County Park. This new parcel is currently undeveloped with no public access or vegetation management.

The Greater Cedarburg Foundation awarded the Planning and Parks Department a grant to enable invasive species management, native tree planting, trail development, and construction of a small

parking lot at the new parcel. This project aligns with GCF's mission to preserve and enrich Cedarburg's cultural and historic heritage as the County Park is home to the last original Covered Bridge in Wisconsin (constructed in 1876).



Andrew Struck, Director for the Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department, said, "We are extremely grateful for this grant to provide public access and habitat restoration at Covered Bridge County Park. This grant will provide critical funding to provide better access to Cedar Creek on the west side of Covered Bridge Road. It will also provide an investment for enhancing the ecological resources at Covered Bridge County Park through invasive species management and tree planting." ■

## Enhancing the Creekside



The Cedarburg History Museum is located in the heart of the Historic Downtown District, just off of Washington Avenue and adjacent to Cedar Creek, with the nearby Columbia Road Bridge serving as a major entrance into downtown. The museum itself is a prominent destination for

visitors and residents to the Cedarburg downtown area, attracting more than 11,000 guests each year (and on track to welcome more than 15,000 guests in 2024!). The museum preserves and interprets Cedarburg and Ozaukee County history through quality exhibitions, preservation, and programming.

The Greater Cedarburg Foundation granted the Cedarburg History Museum an award to enhance and beautify the museum grounds on the east side of its parking lot. The project stabilized the area between the creek, bridge, and parking lot to prevent erosion. Weeds were

removed, native plants in good condition were retained, new plants were installed, a smooth lannon flagstone path was built, and updated benches were placed under the tree. The creekside area is accessible to all and serves as a picturesque resting spot along Cedar Creek.



Joel Willems, Director of Cedarburg History Museum, thanked the Greater Cedarburg Foundation saying, "We're thrilled about the Columbia Creekside Beautification Project and the joy it offers to all who appreciate Cedarburg's natural splendor." ■

## Helping Victims of Domestic Violence



Advocates of Ozaukee, Inc. is the only program in Ozaukee County working with victims and survivors of domestic

and sexual violence and human trafficking. The agency is in its 43rd year of providing shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, transportation, support groups, child and adult advocacy, and holistic services, all delivered in a trauma-informed manner.

Many victims of domestic violence are afraid to flee their abusive situations because they have been told (and it is usually true) that they cannot leave their homes because they will not be able to afford basic living expenses on their own. On other occasions victims leave

suddenly and don't have time to pack. Funding from the Greater Cedarburg Foundation will help meet basic needs for victims as they seek safety and healing. The GCF grant will help pay for prescriptions, medications, eyeglasses, travel vouchers, clothing, school supplies, replacement of vital documents, and other everyday essentials. Once safety and basic needs are met, victims of domestic and sexual violence can start their journey toward healing and thriving.

"Advocates is very grateful for this funding as it will help change the lives of victims who would otherwise have to return to abusive situations for lack of resources," said Barb Fischer, Executive Director. ■

GCF Civic Award (from pg. 1)

lectures, added a Victorian fountain and outdoor music stage to create a summertime beer garden, and published an illustrated history of Wisconsin art that is destined to become the last word on the subject for decades to come.

“Jill’s vision to create a gathering place to celebrate the arts of Wisconsin has resulted in one of Cedarburg’s true gems. Years ago she had a vision of creating a fine arts museum in our community. Now the Cedarburg Art Museum is amongst Wisconsin’s finest assets. From its very beginning our community has been so very blessed to have Jill’s quiet leadership resulting in an enhanced appreciation of both the fine arts and nature,” said Jack Hale, 16th GCF Civic Awardee and, along with his wife, artist Susan Hale, a family friend.

Jill has a many decades-long record of volunteering for other worthy causes. She is a former board member, fundraising chair, volunteer coordinator, and longtime volunteer at the Riveredge Nature Center; board member of the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts; has packed lunches for those experiencing homelessness in Milwaukee; helped burn the prairie at Thorson School’s outdoor classroom; and more. The jewel in her crown is the Cedarburg Art Museum.

Jill would be the first person among us to say that she didn’t do this alone. “I get all the credit for the Art Museum, but I don’t deserve it,” she said.

“Jill’s passion for Cedarburg has positively impacted our community and her legacy will extend into the decades to come. Jill’s goal for the Cedarburg Art Museum was not only to highlight the arts, but also to support Cedarburg as a community that’s vibrant and an interesting place in which to live,” said Pam Helf, Past President of the museum’s Board of Directors.

Jill Hepburn designated the Cedarburg Art Museum as the recipient of the cash gift given to the GCF Civic Award winner. ■

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

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Cedarburg ... Now and Forever  
is published by the  
Greater Cedarburg Foundation, Inc.  
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Cedarburg, WI 53012

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The Greater Cedarburg Foundation is a community trust that establishes endowments and administers the income thereon for the betterment of the greater Cedarburg area. The Greater Cedarburg Foundation works closely with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, where it maintains an affiliation. Gifts to the Greater Cedarburg Foundation are tax deductible to the extent applicable under relevant tax law.



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