Anniversary Year Comes to a Close

What a year! Thank you for celebrating 40 years of Looking Forward and Giving Back with the Watertown Area Community Foundation. If you haven’t gotten a chance to read 40 stories for 40 years, you can do so on our website: watertowncommunityfoundation.org.

2019 was a blessing in many ways - the Foundation’s anniversary year among them. There were many wonderful gifts that the Watertown area unwrapped in 2019. The following are among those on a long list. The Foundation has been a proud supporter of many of these organizations/programs.

Hard Hat Jo, Farmer and Spirit of Steel are just a few of the pieces in Watertown Artwalk. Thanks to sponsors and Friends of Artwalk, sculptures continue to enhance our downtown, as well as Lake Area Technical Institute and the Redlin Art Center’s grounds. The art is enjoyed year-round by residents and visitors of all ages. Beyond Artwalk, much more is being done to improve and enhance downtown Watertown. The Thursday Night Live, featuring weekly summer concerts, continues to bring music lovers out for a free concert in the outdoor downtown venue. We were fortunate to kick off the 2019 TNL season with the Hush Band in celebration of the Foundation’s 40th anniversary. New store fronts are dressing up our downtown and other enhancements are complementing our visitors’ downtown experience. The Goss Opera House is beginning to bloom and Watertown Area Community Foundation Park is in downtown’s future.

Supporting youth is a gift that gives back in many ways for years to come. East Central Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA) opened its local office this year. The new Boys & Girls Club of Watertown facility continues to help mentor and shape the futures of thousands of children who walk through its door. Watertown Healthy Youth Coalition and Project SUCCESS at Watertown Middle School and Watertown High School are also among gifts supporting youth and their tomorrow.

Watertown is home to a top college in the nation – another true gift. Lake Area Technical Institute continues to grow with its facility and educational offerings as well as with its student population.

Watertown Area Transit service has grown into a new name, Community Transit of Watertown & Sisseton, Inc. By the end of the year, Transit’s fleet will have provided roughly 70,000 rides.

The Mellette Memorial Association (Mellette House) and the Codington County Heritage Museum give us the wonderful gift of preserving and sharing history in interesting and meaningful ways.

Interlakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) is a much-needed gift to many in our

cont’d on back page

TIS THE SEASON – of giving and this young man, Leo, age 7, has it all figured out. He came into the Watertown Area Community Foundation recently with a $20 donation to support the new park planned for the downtown district. ‘You made my Christmas,’ said Jan DeBerg, executive director of the Foundation. ‘I like doing it, too,’ Leo said as he smiled ear to ear. He and his mother told the Foundation, they started giving back with Leo a few years ago after reading the Berenstein Bears Joy of Giving and just because it’s the right thing to do. Leo supports several other organizations in Watertown as well. ‘It makes me feel good, giving stuff to other people and places,’ he said. As for the new park, he knows it will be great for all ages, and he hopes it will have monkey bars.
community. It is instrumental to the 60s’ Plus Dining and local HeadStart programs, as well as the newly formed Watertown Transitional Housing Program. ICAP also partners with Delta Dental twice a year to bring approximately $32,000 in free dental care to roughly 50 area youths.

From the fireworks show at the Redlin Art Center to the Optimist Club’s Winter Wonderland and all the great concerts and events in between, the Watertown area has the opportunity to experience beauty and arts and culture in many ways. The public is even invited to an annual Pow Wow. Local talent is phenomenal. Town Players, Karing Kapers, the Sounds of the Season Community Concert and other school productions and concerts continue to serve us performances worthy of standing ovations. The Civic Arena and DD Miller Auditorium have been undergoing improvements for sporting events and performances alike.

The Redlin Art Center continues to offer us the magnificent gifts of Terry Redlin’s paintings, other art and events in a one-of-a-kind extraordinary place.

While the Watertown Regional Library is a gift in its own rite, library staff members go above and beyond every year to host the annual Community Foundation’s Christmas Tree Fundraiser.

Many organizations in our community give to our community 365 days out of the year. There are so many more not mentioned in this column: Beacon Center, PACH, Sea of Goodwill, Joy Ranch, Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, Special Olympics, Watertown Fire Department, Watertown Police Department, Watertown Senior Activities Center, Watertown Volunteer Center… the list goes on and I know I speak for many when I say “Thank you.”

Several local nonprofits are starting 2020 with a grant, thanks to Giving Back 365 donors. The 2019 Watertown Area Community Foundation program had nearly 100 participants who gave at a dollar a day during the year. Donors’ $365 gifts were split with half being awarded in grants and half being put in an endowed fund to support future grants. The total available for granting in 2019 was $22,200 which included those gifts and the endowment earnings.

At the end of the year, Giving Back 365 donors voted on the grant applications received. Here are the results:

$2,000 to Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. to help with providing rides at no cost for clients of the Codington County Welfare office, Beacon Center and Serenity Hills.

$700 to East Central CASA to purchase training materials for advocates.

$1,049 to Habitat for Humanity Greater Watertown Region to purchase a generator to use on worksites and offsite events.

$2,000 to ICAP 60s’ Plus Dining to purchase 12 hot and 12 cold insulated food delivery bags for the Watertown Home Delivery.

$1,504 to Lake Area Zoological Society to support the Wildlife Warriors boys’ program at Bramble Park Zoo.

$2,000 to Watertown Area People Against Child Hunger (PACH) to purchase flat-bed and utility carts and also develop PACH’s website.

$500 to Relay for Life to purchase survivor/caregiver shirts and lapel pins, survivor flags, and miscellaneous items for complimentary bags and décor at event.

$965 to Special Olympics – Watertown Area to purchase a printer and ink cartridges.

$1,000 to Watertown Artwalk to help with publishing costs of the 2020 Artwalk brochures.

$2,000 to Watertown Police Department Camp Chance to provide T-shirts for the 2020 participants.

$800 to Watertown Police DASH to purchase a laptop computer and software for DASH events.

$1,400 to Watertown Senior Activities Center to purchase a vacuum cleaner and portable dishwasher for the Center.

Thank you to the 2019 Giving Back 365 donors for making these grants possible. If you would like to join the 2020 Giving Back 365 effort, please send your gift to: Watertown Area Community Foundation, 211 E. Kemp, Watertown, SD  57201. For more information, call 605-882-3731.