

Madison Gives

Spring 2026

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Madison
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Mission

MCF will engage Greater Madison in philanthropy to advance a more vibrant and equitable community.

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As I consider my retirement at the end of this year, I have been reflecting on what a joy it is to be part of the Madison Community Foundation – not only as its CEO, but also as a Fundholder and Legacy Society member. These connections will remain long after my employment at MCF has ended. And while I am enormously proud of what we have accomplished together over the last 13 years, I am also eager to be part of a growing community foundation in the future.



In this newsletter we highlight stories that reflect how MCF Fundholders and Legacy Society members are investing in that future, including Barbara Johnson, whose giving supports investigative journalism through Wisconsin Watch, strengthening independent journalism for generations to come.

You'll also meet Dan Mansoor, who helped his parents create a fund at MCF in 2001, through which the family has supported many causes that advance the quality of life in Madison. This fund now will be designated to support scholarships for nonprofit leaders to attend the Goodman Nonprofit Center's Fellowship program.

MCF also creates impact through its grantmaking programs – made possible by donors who entrust our board and staff to support timely grants as the needs and opportunities in our community evolve over time. You can read about two of the projects supported in 2025 by grants from MCF's Community Impact Fund on pages 4 and 5.

And finally, as 2026 marks the United States' 250th birthday, MCF will celebrate our democracy by making grants to enhance nonpartisan civic engagement. These will be directed to register eligible voters, ensure they have timely and accurate information, and encourage volunteering at the polls. On page 7, you'll find a list of election resources.

Thank you for being part of this work – and for helping to strengthen Greater Madison.

Bob Sorge
President and CEO
Madison Community Foundation



Leaving a Legacy for Journalism

“I think we’re here on Earth to try to make our little piece of it as healthy and as prosperous as we can for as many as we can,” said Barbara Johnson. “Giving back to the community became important to me when I realized I could. And the cause that is important to me is nonprofit journalism.”

News and Accountability

Barbara was a student at the University of Michigan during the Watergate era, which showed her the power of journalism to hold those in authority to account. This plays out even at the local level.

“It’s easy if you live in Madison or even Milwaukee to take our local journalism for granted, because we have relatively a lot of local journalism,” Barbara said. “But in most of Wisconsin that isn’t true. In that kind of vacuum, how do you even begin to think about what’s important when there’s just silence?”

Rebuilding the State’s Local News Ecosystem

“Since 2013, two-thirds of Wisconsin’s journalists have seen their jobs disappear, and the state lost 19 newspapers in 2023 and 2024 alone,” Barbara said. “The work of local news is, in part, to bind us together in our community values. And that without local news, we can’t do that.”

Barbara’s belief in the importance of local journalism led her to create an endowment fund to support Wisconsin Watch through Madison Community Foundation.

Wisconsin Watch is a nonprofit news organization working to help communities fill the void left by the loss of local news outlets. “We do that by providing local reporting that lets people know what’s going on and helps make our communities better,” explained George Stanley, CEO, Wisconsin Watch.

“I think this is a moment in history when local news is more important than it’s ever been,” Barbara explained.

“That’s what ties us together and helps us know where we live. If we have no idea what our City Councils are deciding, how our money is being spent, we will find ourselves with deeper problems and greater divides.”

Supporting Her Values, and Looking to the Future

Barbara came to MCF to create a fund to support Wisconsin Watch and the vital work it’s doing in our communities. She later established plans for the Wisconsin Watch fund to grow through a gift through her estate. “Sorting through your priorities and your values and doing it while you’re still able to see the effect of your gift is really rewarding,” Barbara said. “Wisconsin has such a long history of being a proud, thoughtful place where we care for one another. This is part of that.”

Barbara is using her giving to lay the groundwork for the future of Wisconsin journalism. “I hope 50 years from now, people will look at the state of Wisconsin and think, ‘Wow, they did something right way back early on to create this thriving network of local news sources.’ I would be really proud if my gifts were thought to be part of the beginning of this.”

You can watch Barbara share her story on our website at madsionives.org/stories-of-impact.

If you would like to explore how you can support the causes you care about, we would be happy to help. Call 608-232-1763 or email legacy@madsionives.org.



Powered by Community Generosity

Grants From MCF's Community Impact Fund

Clean Lakes Alliance and ART House 360 are two of the nonprofits that received grants from MCF's Community Impact fund in 2025. Although they work in very different areas, these organizations highlight the power of community-driven philanthropy in action.

Clean Lakes Alliance: Coordinating Action for Healthier Waters

The five lakes of the Yahara watershed are central to life in Dane County, shaping our landscape, our economy and our sense of place. Since its inception in 2010, Clean Lakes Alliance's mission has been to champion the lakes and watershed stewardship for the benefit of all. "The lakes are a collective resource," explained Mike Smale, Watershed Program Specialist. "It is the responsibility of everyone — homeowners, farmers, businesses and individuals alike — to care for this resource."

In 2022, the nonprofit gathered 19 organizations from across Dane County to produce the Renew the Blue stakeholder action plan, which identified key actions to collectively reduce the delivery of runoff, phosphorus pollution and E. coli to our lakes. To ensure progress around recommended actions, Clean Lakes Alliance created the Renew the Blue Council.

Now with more than 35 member organizations, the Council brings together nonprofits, government agencies and local municipalities to align efforts, share data and accelerate progress toward healthier lakes.

"Across the county, we had many organizations with aligned interests but a lack of communication between them," Smale said. "The creation of the Council allows everyone to regularly be in the same room where their ideas and concerns can be heard and uplifted."

MCF awarded Clean Lakes Alliance a three-year, \$75,000 grant from the Community Impact Fund to support the Council's launch and early operations. "We are grateful for this very generous grant from the Madison Community Foundation," said Smale. "It will help us push through the initial three-year launch period as we recruit members, plan meetings and become self-sustaining."

With approximately 2.7 million visitors and generating more than \$220 million in annual economic activity, protecting Greater Madison's lakes and the surrounding watershed must remain a priority in Dane County. The Renew the Blue Council, with its embedded shared leadership and accountability, is helping ensure that it is.

Learn more about Clean Lakes Alliance's impact and events at www.cleanlakesalliance.org



ART House 360: Creating Space for Culture, Creativity and Connection

In Verona, a historic schoolhouse is being reimagined as a vibrant gathering place where art, culture and community intersect. ART House 360 is transforming the former St. Andrew School into a 12,000 square-foot multicultural arts center designed to reflect and celebrate diversity and creativity in Dane County.

Co-founded by Mónica Cliff, Jessica Lanius, Karisa Johnson and AJ Juarez, ART House 360 grew out of a desire to build community through the arts. As artists and educators, the co-founders saw firsthand how creativity can open doors, build confidence, and bring people together across cultures and generations. “The goal was clear from the beginning,” said Cliff, ART House 360’s Co-Director. “We wanted to remove barriers to art access and create a home where people of all ages, backgrounds and experience can explore many artistic disciplines under one roof.”

The renovated building will house gallery space, classrooms, studios and performance areas, with six resident organizations offering lessons, workshops and classes.

“The space really came to life with the support and partnership of our resident organizations: Slate Blue Studios, Theatre LILA, BARRIO Dance, Inventiva Works, Verona Makers Space and Loud & Proud Studios,” Cliff said. “Together, they help shape a vibrant ecosystem of learning, performance and artistic exploration.”

MCF supported the ART House 360 with a \$75,000 grant from the Community Impact Fund. The grant will help to cover the remaining renovation costs, including the completion of critical ADA accessibility upgrades.

“Once the building is complete and safe, the grant will also support, establishing a building maintenance fund for long-sustainability and more,” said Cliff. “In essence, this grant funding is not the end of a project but the beginning of our impact.”

ART House 360 has been hosting classes, workshops and shows open to the community since August 2025, and stands as a testament to what’s possible when community generosity meets creative vision.

Find ART House 360’s current offerings at www.ARTHouse360.com.

In 2025, Madison Community Foundation awarded \$1.4 million in grants from the Community Impact Fund to 30 local nonprofit organizations. These grants support work across arts and culture, community development, the environment and learning, while also helping organizations build the internal capacity needed to grow, adapt and respond to emerging needs.

You can find the complete list of 2025 grants at madisongives.org/community-impact/current-ci-grants/.

A Deep and Abiding Connection to Madison

When Claire and Menahem Mansoor arrived in Madison in 1955, they knew they had found their true home. One way they expressed their love for the city was by giving back to the community. This served as an inspiration to their children, Dan and Yardena.

In the 1990s, to help facilitate their parents' giving, Dan and Yardena explored creating a private foundation. They soon decided, however, that a donor advised fund would be a better route, and in 2001 Claire and Menahem created the Claire and Menahem Mansoor Family Advised Fund at Madison Community Foundation.

"I've always been an admirer of MCF and its effectiveness and leadership," Dan said. "The ease of transitioning my parents' giving to a donor advised fund at MCF and the efficiency of giving through a donor advised fund made it an attractive choice."

Claire and Menahem used their fund to support organizations that were important to them, including various education and faith-based organizations. They also named their children as successor advisors to the fund, and eventually, Dan and Yardena took over supporting organizations that reflected the family's values.

Giving Back Maintains Ties

Dan has devoted his life to philanthropy, both professionally and personally. Today, he lives in Cleveland, Ohio, where he founded a firm that provides nonprofit and philanthropy advisory services. Although he left Madison to attend college after graduating from West High School, his connection to the city remains strong.

"I've always appreciated the gift of growing up in Madison," Dan shared. "Even though my sister and I have settled elsewhere, we've never wanted to sever our ties with the city. Engaging with charitable organizations, our schools and Madison Community Foundation, allows us to remain connected to a community that continues to hold our attention and affection."



Supporting Schools by Engaging Alumni

In 2005, Dan's passion for giving back led him to work with the leadership at West High School to create a database of 22,000 alumni. He then helped organize a fundraising drive to support the renovation of the school's Ash Street entrance.

"I've always believed that the alumni of our public schools would be philanthropically supportive of our schools if we made the case for support in the same way that public universities have done," Dan explained. "My work with Madison West has been very rewarding and I believe we are only at the start of what will be a significant initiative in providing a margin of excellence in Madison's public schools through alumni giving."

Following Inspiration With Action

While Dan's parents served as the earliest and biggest influence for his generosity, he also found inspired by Irwin and Robert Goodman. When the Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Foundation's support allowed MCF to launch the Goodman Nonprofit Center, Dan saw an opportunity to be involved in a project that reflected the Goodman brothers' legacy and tied in with his commitment to strengthening nonprofits and education.

"I've been a big fan of capacity building as well as pursuing an effort to elevate the practice and profession of fundraising and development," Dan said. "I have always been in awe of the Goodman brothers, and I love the idea of a nonprofit center for Madison. Yardena and I believed using the fund our parents created to support scholarships for the Goodman Fellows program was a perfect approach."

Although the Dan and Yardena no longer call Madison home, their ties to the community continue to make a difference here.



A Celebration of 250 Years of Democracy

In 2026, the United States marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, creating a country that would be ruled democratically; government by the consent of the governed.

In celebration of our nation's 250th birthday, Madison Community Foundation is committed to ensuring a vibrant, healthy and engaged electorate in Dane County. We will be identifying and investing in nonpartisan programs that strengthen civic participation, ensure eligible voters are informed and polling places have the resources they need to function well.

Here are three meaningful ways you can prepare for the midterm elections this fall:

1. Check Your Registration

If you have already registered to vote, take a few minutes now to confirm your status.

If you have not registered to vote, you can do so easily with a valid Wisconsin Driver's License or State of Wisconsin ID issued by the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles.

You can register to vote, verify your registration status and update your address at myvote.wi.gov.

If you prefer to register in person, you can do so at your municipal clerk's office up to the Friday before the election, or at your polling place on Election Day.

Encourage family members — especially young adults who have recently turned 18 or moved — to register or check their status as well.

2. Know Your Options for Voting

All registered Wisconsin voters may request an absentee ballot for any reason. You can vote absentee by mail or in-person at a designated early voting location before Election Day. You can learn more and register for a mail-in absentee ballot at myvote.wi.gov.

Voters that need accommodations to vote have options for support as well. The Wisconsin Elections Commission is committed to ensuring that polling places are accessible to all voters, and voters can request assistance if needed.

Understanding your options ahead of time makes Election Day smoother and helps ensure that your voice is heard. Visit elections.wi.gov/voters/accessible-voting to learn more.

3. Volunteer

Poll workers — also called election officials — are critical to ensuring smooth, efficient and fair elections. They check in voters, process registrations, manage absentee ballots, and ensure election integrity.

You can learn more at myvote.wi.gov or through your local city/town clerk's office.

Nonpartisan organizations like the League of Women Voters host voter registration drives, provide rides to polling places, and help answer questions about voting. Volunteering with these organizations strengthens the civic fabric of our community.

Help Lay the Groundwork for the Next 250 Years

Democracy has endured in the United States because ordinary Americans have supported the right to vote for 250 years. As we celebrate this extraordinary country, each of us can honor those who have fought — and often died — for its ideals by leaning in, getting engaged, and ensuring our democracy thrives in this election year and long into the future.

Did You Know?

You can use a wide variety of assets to make a gift to MCF, to start or add to your own fund, or to contribute to a fund designated to support a nonprofit organization.

Give Now: Cash, stocks and mutual fund shares, or real estate.

Give Through Your Estate:

Through your will, or name MCF as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement account.

From Another Account: Your retirement account, commercial donor advised fund or private foundation.

Learn more about the gifts MCF can accept at madisongives.org/waystogive.



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Join Us at Madison Gives: Register Today!

Madison Gives is an inspiring evening bringing together donors, nonprofit leaders and business leaders to celebrate generosity and community impact. Join us May 12 at Monona Terrace for a lively networking reception, dinner and powerful program highlighting stories of local leadership and change.

Be part of this annual celebration of philanthropy and connect with others who are shaping our community's future. Learn more and register today at madisongives.org/celebrate26.

The generous support of our sponsors makes this celebration possible:



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