Madison Gives

Fall 2026







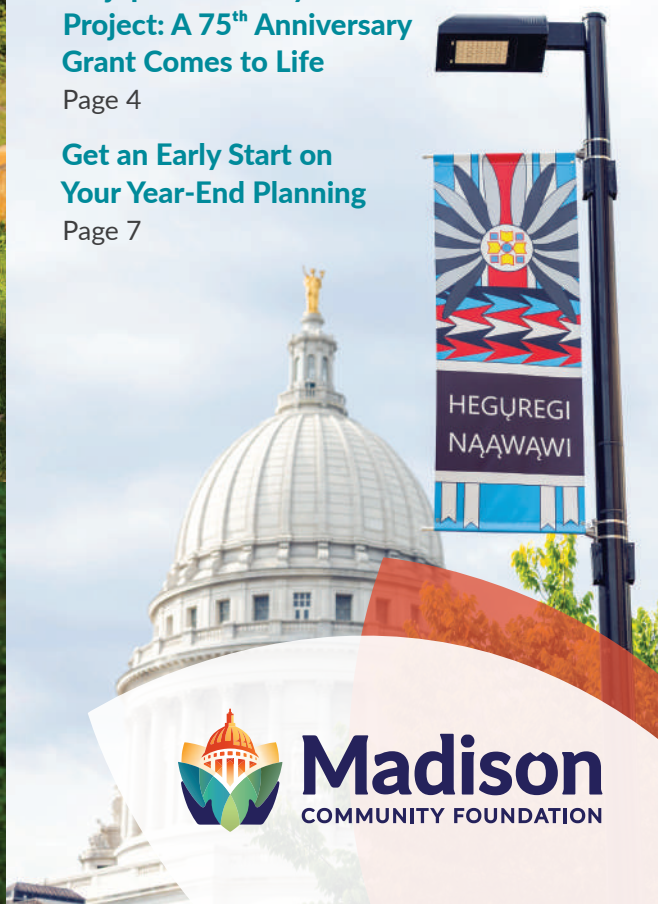


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Madison
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Mission

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

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Building the Capacity to Respond



One of the things I value most about community foundations is our ability to take the long view while also responding to the needs of the moment.

On September 24, Madison Community Foundation announced a $350,000 grant to the City of Madison to accelerate implementation of body-worn cameras for Madison police officers. The City and Police Department already had a plan to implement the cameras over three years. Our grant removes a financial barrier, allowing that work to be completed in one year.

This is an unusual grant for MCF, but I believe it demonstrates an important role philanthropy can play. We don't have all the answers to the difficult questions our community faces, and philanthropy cannot solve those challenges alone. But there are times when we can bring resources to the table, work alongside government and other partners, and help move a solution forward.

Sometimes we see the results of that work quickly. Other times, impact takes more time.

The cover story in this issue is a wonderful example. In 2018, as part of MCF's 75th anniversary celebration, we announced a grant to help tell the 12,000-year history of Teejop, the Four Lakes region we now know as Madison, by highlighting the unique nature of effigy mounds in our community. After much listening, learning and collaboration with Ho-Chunk community members, that investment has come to life this fall through public art installations at culturally important sites throughout Madison.

You'll also read about an endowment being created by Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County to honor the late Michael Johnson. That fund represents another kind of long-term investment: creating a permanent source of support that can continue the work and values a person helped advance during his lifetime.

All of these stories remind me why building MCF's charitable resources matters. The stronger those resources are, the more capacity we have to respond to opportunities and needs — those we can see today and those we can't yet anticipate.

You may have recently received our annual appeal. I hope you'll consider making a gift to strengthen one of MCF's funds. Every contribution builds our collective capacity to invest in this community, now and for generations to come.

Thank you for investing in our community.

Bob Sorge, President and CEO

Building on Michael Johnson's Legacy

Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County creates an endowment to carry his vision forward

When Michael Johnson, longtime president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County, died unexpectedly in June, Madison lost a passionate community leader and a fierce champion for young people.

During his 16 years leading the BGCDC, Michael worked to ensure children and teens had people in their corner, a safe place to belong and opportunities to discover what they could achieve. Just as important, he thought about how to sustain that work for generations to come.

Taking Action to Prepare Today's Youth for the Future

Michael's vision for the Clubs' work focused on three areas: creating a sense of belonging, supporting learning and helping young people launch into adulthood. Whether a young person was preparing for college through the AVID/TOPS program or engaging in workforce training at the McKenzie Regional Workforce Center, Michael made sure the Boys and Girls Clubs could help.

Michael also listened to youth and responded to their concerns when he could. In 2020, a group of young people approached Michael about the lack of representation of people of color at the State Capitol. Michael brought together taskforce whose work culminated with the installation of a sculpture celebrating the life and legacy of former Wisconsin Secretary of State Velvalea Phillips on the State Capitol grounds.

Ensuring Opportunities for Tomorrow

Michael was a consummate fundraiser — and a strong believer in the power of endowments. That belief was evident as he planned for the McKenzie Regional Workforce Center. From the beginning, Michael wanted to "make sure that we have an endowment around in perpetuity that's going to help kids in the years and decades to come."



Now, BGCDC is using that philosophy to honor Michael. The Michael Johnson Legacy Fund, which continues the Build Up BGCDC Campaign, will help ensure that Michael's vision continues for generations.

The campaign's goal is ambitious: to raise $35 million to support the BGCDC now and into the future. Of that total, $30 million will build an endowment at MCF to create a permanent source of support for young people throughout Dane County.

For Interim President and CEO Taylor Jackson, the campaign is about more than honoring Michael's accomplishments. It is about continuing the work he cared so deeply about.

"The most meaningful way we can honor Michael is not simply by remembering what his leadership built, but by continuing to build upon it and ensure its sustainability beyond our lifetimes," Jackson said.

A Legacy That Keeps Working

The fund will honor Michael not only by remembering the difference he made, but by carrying forward something he believed deeply: Invest in young people, give them opportunities to succeed and build the resources needed to keep doing it — for generations.



Teejop Community Art Project

A 75th Anniversary Grant Comes to Life

In 2018, the sixth grant announced as part of Madison Community Foundation's 75th anniversary Year of Giving celebration was for the First Nations Heritage Tour — a collaborative community history project celebrating the 12,000-year history of Teejop (pronounced day-JOPE), the four lakes region now known as Madison.

"When we embarked on our 75th anniversary journey, we wanted to make a difference for the many organizations and communities that steward the unique natural and cultural treasures that make Madison so special," said Bob Sorge, President and CEO. "Dane County is the center of the effigy mound building culture in the world — it is an extraordinary privilege to live among these ancient sculptures."

As planning began, it became clear that this project would require time to ensure that it honored the history in a way that the Ho-Chunk people felt was right. Teejop-area Ho-Chunk community members met for several years to carefully consider the locations and values included in this project.

The result is a series of public art installations, created by seven indigenous artists and located at five culturally important sites around the city of Madison. They will be on display until November 1, 2026.

The selected artists include Gene Delcourt, Lightning the Earth New Rider, Chloris Lowe, Dakota Mace, Melanie Tallmadge Sainz, Christopher Sweet and June Whitehorse.

"After many years of preparation, we're excited to finally share this learning opportunity with the Madison community," said Omar Poler, Indigenous Education Coordinator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and enrolled member of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community. "We encourage everyone to visit the places, reflect on the project's themes, and appreciate the wonderful art. Together, let's consider our shared responsibilities to this beautiful place: Teejop."

To learn more about the project and artists, and to read a full description of each installation and its significance, visit *teejop.org*.



Site #1: Capitol Square

100-200 Blocks of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Resistance & Removals

"Our ancestors defied repeated removals and endured unimaginable hardships to ensure that we are still living in our homeland."

Chloris Lowe (Hoocąk)
We Still Dance (Hegųregi Paašiwi)



Site #2: Tenney Park

Values

"Our values of love and respect are interwoven in every aspect of our culture."

Christopher Sweet (Hoocąk/White Earth Ojibwe)
Sisters Interwoven



Site #3: Olbrich & Hudson Parks

Mounds

"Teejop was once home to a flourishing community that created thousands of mounds, and we are the caretakers of those that remain."

June Whitehorse (Hoocąk)
Greeting the Land



Site #4: Merrill Springs

Water

"Like our ancestors, we cherish and respect the springs, lakes and rivers as living beings."

Gene Delcourt (Abenaki, French and Filipino)
***Dugout* at Merrill Spring**





Site #5: UW Arboretum

Land

"This land is sacred. Its energy and abundance have sustained Wąąkšikra from time immemorial. It sings to our community and transforms all who listen."

Melanie Tallmadge Sainz (Hoocąk) and Lightning the Earth New Rider (Hoocąk)
Hazac Mąą

Dakota Mace (Diné)
Tsé' Bahane'

Harmony Kronick Promoted to Vice President of Operations



As MCF has grown, the complexity of managing its day-to-day operations has increased. In recognition of this, and of the work required to ensure the organization functions smoothly, the Board of Governors recently promoted Harmony Kronick to the newly created position of Vice President of Operations.

Harmony has been part of MCF for 20 years and has seen tremendous growth and change during her time here. "Technology has changed so much since I started at MCF," Harmony said. "It's hard to believe, but donor grant recommendation forms used to come in triplicate and were completed by hand (with an occasional typewriter submission). Today most grant recommendations are submitted electronically — either by email or through our new cloud-based donor portal."

Technology is just one area where Harmony's work is vital to MCF. Like much operations work, some of the biggest areas of Harmony's impact happen behind the scenes. One of the highlights for her is helping MCF maintain its National Standards accreditation.

Maintaining accreditation requires MCF to demonstrate its compliance with the law as well as an extensive list of internal operating policies and procedures based on industry best practices. "It's a rigorous and intense process," Harmony shared, "but National Standards accreditation is an important measure of a community foundation's commitment to responsibly steward charitable contributions with transparency and integrity. I'm very proud of our accreditation status and the fact that MCF repeatedly meets this high standard."

Harmony appreciates having a job that aligns with her personal values. "On top of working with the absolute best group of colleagues anyone could ask for, I also get to work with generous donors and dedicated nonprofit staff," she said. "And we're all working to strengthen the Madison community and enhance the quality of life for all. It's amazing to get to be a part of this work every day."

Welcome Jared Lee



Jared Lee recently joined MCF as the Goodman Nonprofit Center Community Engagement and Outreach Fellow. He is working on his PhD in the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies program at UW-Madison, and joins us as a fellow through the University's Center for the Humanities. The Public Humanities Graduate Fellowship program is designed to provide PhD students at the University with experience outside of academia, not only to allow them to explore diverse career paths, but also to cultivate a practice of public humanities within their academic work.

Jared brings a background in directing, producing, marketing and artistic leadership in the performing arts. During his time at the Goodman Nonprofit Center, he hopes to promote, engage and champion the Center's work while bridging his theatre and creative expertise with the broader nonprofit community.

Get an Early Start on Your Year-End Planning



Now is the perfect time to start thinking about your year-end giving plans. Some of the strategies that provide the biggest tax benefits — leaving you with more to give — require time and planning to execute successfully. Here are a few you might want to consider.

Strategy #1: Should You Consider Bunching Your Gifts?

Bunching is a strategy in which taxpayers who typically make charitable gifts of roughly equal amounts every year consolidate two years of charitable gifts into one year to take advantage of the itemized charitable gift deductions. Provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act make the discussion about bunching more nuanced, so be sure to talk to your financial or tax advisor first. (Read about how the provisions in the OBBB may affect the value of bunching at *madisongives.org/bunching-revisited*.)

If you choose to bunch your gifts, a donor advised fund at MCF can allow you to easily make those gifts and distribute them over time.

Strategy #2: Does Donating Appreciated Stock Make Sense for You?

Using appreciated stock to fund your charitable giving makes sense from a tax perspective for most people: Your charitable deduction is based on the stock's fair market value at the time of donation, and the nonprofit can sell the stock without triggering capital gains tax, making it beneficial for both sides.

MCF is happy to accept donations of public stock, but to process them as gifts made in 2026, we ask that you contact us to initiate the gift by December 7. If you'd like to make a gift to an organization that is not able to process stock gifts, consider contributing the stock to a passthrough donor advised fund and making the gift from there.

Strategy #3: Can Your Retirement Plan Fund Your Giving?

If you have saved more in your individual retirement account than you will need, you can take advantage of a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA to fund your giving.

QCDs are available to anyone who has a traditional IRA and has reached age 70½. While you cannot direct a QCD to a donor advised fund, you can use one to fund gifts to a designated fund for a specific organization, a field of interest fund, or MCF's Community Impact or Priority Funds.

You can learn more about at *madisongives.org/QCDs*.

Strategy #4: Have You Recommended Grants From Your Donor Advised Fund?

Tuesday, December 15 is the last day you can recommend distributions from your donor advised fund for 2026. If you still have funds to distribute, start planning today which organizations you'd like to support in 2026 so you can make your recommendations in time.

Final Note: Don't Wait Until the Last Minute. Timing of Gifts Matters.

If you are planning to make a gift in 2026, remember that timing is important. If you are going to mail a check to MCF or to any nonprofit organization, it must be postmarked by December 31. If you are making a gift using a credit card, it must appear on your statement before December 31. So don't leave your giving to the last minute — make a plan today.

Year-End Giving Deadlines

December 1
Talk to your broker about gifts of mutual fund shares

December 7
Initiate any planned stock gifts

December 15
Last day to submit grant recommendations from your fund

December 31
Donations must be delivered or postmarked by today

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Generosity Builds Great Things

Americans carry the spirit of generosity forward in every corner of the country by giving to the causes they care about. And when they give locally, their giving plays an important role, funding the work that strengthens the places we call home.

For more than 80 years, Madison Community Foundation has been privileged to support neighbors helping neighbors and rallying around causes and projects that matter to us all. Every day, generous people from across our community come together to support the city they love and to strengthen the organizations doing important work here.

MCF is joining the Council on Foundations to explore and share what generosity looks like in our community, and what it helps build. It's a celebration of what giving has helped to create here in the Greater Madison area, and an invitation for you to be part of what generosity builds next.

What will your generosity help build?

You can find inspiration at *madisongives.org/generosity-builds*.