



A newsletter of the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation

# FoundationTimes

OCTOBER 2021

## Applauding Community Volunteers

Four outstanding community volunteers were recently honored by the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation (GMFF) at its Ovation event. Honorees were Mary Stark, Lifetime Achievement Award; Gail Grenier Sweet, Shining Star Award; Rebecca Dombrowicki, Unsung Hero Award; and John Lukaszewski, Patriotism Award. Honorees are selected by the GMFF from nominations submitted by citizens or groups in the greater Menomonee Falls area.

The civic leaders were applauded at the GMFF's annual Ovation event on September 23rd at North Hills Country Club. Also recognized were the area non-profit groups that received nearly \$50,000 in grants from 2020-2021.



Rebecca celebrates with her table of guests.

### UNsung HERO REBECCA DOMBROWICKI

As part of Karen Nelson's nomination, Rebecca stated: "I whole-heartedly believe that children should not go hungry and worry about food. I know that there are so many types of families out there today with enough struggles, and if our program can help anyone in the tiniest way, it is worth lightening the load for other human beings."

Dombrowicki has been part of Blessings in a Backpack since it started eight years ago.

Blessings in a Backpack provides food on the weekends for elementary school children who might otherwise go hungry. In Menomonee Falls, Blessings in a Backpack serves 85 children weekly, packing 2600 bags annually.

She thanked the giving, big-hearted volunteers who work with the Blessings in a Backpack program.

Rebecca closed her acceptance speech with a quote from Muhammad Ali, "Service for others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

### PATRIOTISM AWARD JOHN LUKASZEWSKI

Janet Hickle nominated John Lukaszewski because he has always been a strong supporter of veterans' groups and programs for many years.

From 1961 – 1965, John served in the Air Force. He left service at the rank of A1C Airman 1st Class as a radar maintenance technician. Menomonee Falls has been his home since 1969. He and his wife Mary raised three children here.

His service to veterans has occurred in many forms. He has been a member of the Henrizi Schneider American Legion Post #382 for twelve years and six

years as the post commander. John participates in the American Legion Post Honor Guard at veterans' funerals and parades, North Middle School Memorial Day program, and the Community Center's Veterans Day program. His steady leadership



John accepts his award.

(continued on inside)

Charitable  
Giving.  
Lasting  
Legacy.

Ensure grant  
funding for  
Menomonee Falls  
non-profits for  
years to come.

*APPLAUDING, from cover*

and calm demeanor help bring together veterans' groups for combined events, such as the Memorial Day Tribute Ceremony held at the Menomonee Falls WWII Monument.

During his speech, John shared, "I have taken a lot of pride in supporting the vets. And also visiting the vets that never get to see anyone. It really means a lot."

## SHINING STAR GAIL GRENIER SWEET

Gail Hammersmith shared the reasons for nominating Gail Grenier Sweet for the Shining Star award.

As the founder of **HOPE Network**, a fixture of this community since 1982, Gail has worked tirelessly to support the needs of single mothers and their families. Her vision was for a life-affirming organization to build a community for single mothers and connect them with resources. She used her network and charismatic personality to recruit supporters to this cause, even assuming interim office roles during staff changes. She continues to play an active role on the board and in planning the annual fundraiser. She also speaks on behalf of HOPE and remains an advocate in the community for single mothers.

Thousands of women have been members of HOPE Network and have received access to resources and family enrichment. More than 3,000 infants have received a safe place to sleep since 1982. More than 120 scholarships have been awarded since 1988 to help single mothers pay for college tuition and childcare while they are in school. None of this would have happened without Gail.

During her speech, Gail explained her vision for HOPE: concrete community support for women and girls facing unwanted pregnancies. She expressed how single moms persist and do what is impossible, but they do it.



*Gail speaks about her vision for HOPE Network.*



*Mary celebrates with Judy Wilkes and Joan Hintze.*

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT MARY STARK

Mary Stark's nomination started with a surprise song and dance by her friends.

"Mary Stark was nominated tonight for her work to make the village a community," Robyn Turtenwald shared in her nomination speech.

Her volunteer work included: Menomonee Falls Little League, 600 hours at the hospital gift shop, the Lombardi Golf Outing, Menomonee Falls Scholarship Foundation, Cheery Cherry Fair, and, most recently the Greater Menomonee Falls Farmers Market director of volunteers.

In response to a volunteer need, Turtenwald said, "Mary does not have the word 'No' in her vocabulary."

Mary thanked the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation, the event sponsors, and the other honorees. She thanked Robyn, her two sons, and her husband, David, extended family, and friends.

"There are all types of volunteers. I am a worker bee," Mary shared. "But it takes the right combination of worker bees to make honey, just like it takes the right combination of volunteers to make a project successful or a committee work."

In closing, Stark spoke a quote, "There are people who make your day. And then there are the ones who make your life."

"This room is filled with people that not only made tonight but every day of my life special. Thank you for being here. This has been a wonderful evening. I will always remember it."

# Grants Support Many Local Non-Profits

Ongoing donations to our endowment help the GMFF award grants year after year. In the past seven years, the GMFF has awarded over \$150,000 in grants. It is truly charitable giving that leaves a lasting legacy in our community.

In 2021 and 2020, twenty-one organizations received \$47,515 in grants from the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation.

## GRANTS SUPPORTING ADULTS

Several organizations received grants that support programs for adults. [The Women's Center](#) supports Menomonee Falls area survivors of domestic and sexual violence through its emergency shelter program.

[Tri-County YMCA Livestrong](#) is a 12-week program for adult cancer survivors to improve functional capacity and increase their quality of life through personalized physical, strength, and social activities.

Another grant supports a [Community League Civic Families Committee](#) that provides local families in need with clothing, hygiene products, holiday gift baskets, and grocery store gift cards.

In 2020, [HOPE Network](#) for single mothers received a grant, as did [ERAs Senior Network](#) for its Readers Café volunteer program in elementary schools.

## GRANTS SUPPORTING YOUTH

Children of Menomonee Falls will enjoy arts and crafts at the [Menomonee Falls Public Library](#), through the purchase of a new die-cut machine and 3D printer with two years of grant funding.

[Association for the Rights of Citizens with handicaps \(ARCh\)](#) will engage Campers at Camp Pow Wow with enhanced virtual programming this summer, a safer way to engage campers due to the pandemic. In 2020, a grant supported the purchase of a mobile cart to improve medical services at camp.

Grant dollars also support area athletes who are part of [Wisconsin Adaptive Sports Association \(WASA\)](#). Funding helps offset the



*Volunteers with the Waukesha County Conservancy Project are care-takers for nature in the Falls.*

cost of a wheelchair and replacement parts that are needed for competition.

In addition, grant funding helps students in the youth apprenticeship program run by [GPS Education Partners](#) at Bradley Corporation Education Center.

In 2020, grant dollars went to [Accompany of Kids](#) for funding handheld wireless microphones. [Addiction Resource Council](#) and [NAMI Waukesha](#) received funding to support lessons at local schools. The [School District of Menomonee Falls Art & Design Department](#) received a grant for a large format printer. Lastly, GMFF supported the [Booster Club's](#) capital campaign for the soccer turf.

## GRANTS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

The entire Village will benefit from the work of [American Farms, Inc.](#) as they will engage people of all abilities in local, organic farming.

[The Waukesha County Conservancy Project](#) will fund a Menomonee Falls Adopt a Preserve project, increasing the natural beauty of our parks.

Grant funding will also support [Falls Patio Players](#) as they upgrade their sound quality through wireless microphone replacements. 2020 grant funds supported [Falls Cable Access Corporation](#) with camera equipment upgrades, [Falls Area Food Pantry](#) to support increased need during the pandemic, [Menomonee Falls Neighborhood Watch](#) for new signage, and the [Wildlife in Need Center](#).

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*Join our Founders Society by making a total contribution of \$10,000 within a 3-year period.*



Greater Menomonee Falls  
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Another Way to  
Support the Greater  
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Foundation

One way to give to the GMFF is through the form of memorials or honorariums. Gifts can be made in memory or honor of a special person such as a loved one, colleague, business associate, and award recipient. This is truly the type of gift that keeps on giving to our community.



**Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation**

Ensure grant funding for Menomonee Falls non-profits for years to come – donate today to help build our endowment. Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at [fallsfoundation.org](http://fallsfoundation.org)