

Spring
2020

THE WALLACE CENTERS OF IOWA DES MOINES · RURAL ORIENT

BIG AS A BARN NEWS

Enriching Community through Sustainable Food & Civility Initiatives

WCI adjusts programs

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, WCI is not hosting any public programs through May 31.

At this time, the postponements include the annual Spring Quilt show, brunch and program; a one-man performance of George Washington Carver in “*One Still Small Voice*”; and Tom Milligan’s portrayal of Grant Wood. New dates have not yet been announced but are expected for the fall.

Program cancellations include nine Farm to Table Thursday dinners and the April 3 and May 1 Hearts and Homes Historic Teas, all at the Wallace House and the Garden Workshop at the Country Life Center. Chef Katie Porter is working on offering the April and May Cooking Classes on-line.

While both office locations are closed to the public, staff are responding to phone calls and emails. Staff are following public health guidelines and many are working from home. Much of the staff work such as spring planting, facility maintenance, program planning, grant writing and bookkeeping is unaffected by location closures. Research for potential new programming and other projects will fill any gaps.

Meeting Community Needs

Henry A. Wallace made a comment that seems appropriate



Due to the coronavirus, the buildings at both locations are closed. The prairie walk at the Country Life Center remains open to the public.

for these times: “Sooner or later the question ‘What is there in it for me?’ will have to be translated into ‘What is there in it for all of us?’” (*American Dreamer*, pg.123)

WCI is meeting community needs in these ways:

- Fresh produce such as spinach and greens intended for Farm to Table Thursday dinners are being re-directed to local food pantries.
- Chef Katie is posting easy favorite recipes and tips on our web site (www.wallace.org) and Facebook

(The Wallace Centers of Iowa) to help with at-home meal preparation.

- The prairie path at the Country Life Center is open to the public for socially-distance walking.
- Using up the last of our storage fruits and vegetables, Chef Katie prepared meals for the medical providers at Unity Point hospital and Children and Families Urban Movement meals-to-go program.
- Partnering with Eat Greater Des Moines to offer fall gleaning events to meet the anticipated increase in food-insecure Iowans.

Staff and the board will continue to monitor the evolving public health situation and make additional decisions to keep staff, partners and participants safe. Updates will be provided as they become available. ☞

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Des Moines, IA 50314.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and relevant news. Contact Ann Taylor at the above address or 515.243.7063. Submissions may be edited.

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job posting



WCI is seeking a **Chef/Food Programs Manager** at the Country Life Center who is educated in the culinary arts

with an interest in local foods, the ability to develop food programming, and the initiative to develop food products. Minimum associate in applied science degree in the culinary arts or extensive experience in commercial food preparation, evidence of teaching ability, examples of collaborations including team building, creative problem solving experience and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Must be able to work Friday evenings and weekends as needed. Must be able to lift up to 50 lbs. and have a valid driver's license. Salary is dependent on experience and education. Can be FT or PT.

Interested? Contact Deb Houghtaling at debrahoughtaling@wallace.org or 641.337.5019 for an application and return with a resume. The application can also be found on WCI's web site: <https://wallace.org/employment-opportunities/>. 

job posting 2



WCI is seeking a part-time **Program Coordinator** with an interest in agriculture, local foods, civility and history and the ability to develop and implement interesting and engaging programming. The

Program Coordinator will manage and expand existing programs, create new programming, and build/expand partnerships. Since most new programming will occur at the Country Life Center, this position will be based at the farm.

We're looking for a bachelor's degree or experience in adult and youth programming, teaching, creative problem solving, and collaborations. Must be able to work evenings and weekends as needed, lift 50 lbs. and have a valid driver's license. Salary is dependent on experience and education.

Interested? Contact Deb Houghtaling at debrahoughtaling@wallace.org or 641.337.5019 for an application and return with a resume. The application can also be found on WCI's web site: <https://wallace.org/employment-opportunities/>. 

fundraising pro joins board of directors



Amara Huffine of West Des Moines recently joined WCI's board of directors. Amara is the Development and Events Director at Susan G. Komen Greater Iowa. Her community involvement includes president and fundraising chair of the Urbandale Optimist Club and secretary and membership chair of the Prairie Voices Toastmasters. She also volunteers with Living History Farms and Chasing Laurels and is a member of YNPN Des Moines and the Association of Fundraising Professionals. A graduate of Grand View University, she serves on its scholarship and award committee and was awarded the 10 Under 10 Award in 2019. She enjoys kayaking, photography, hiking, reading, and horseback riding.

"I firmly believe that my non-profit fundraising experience directly aligns with WCI's needs," Amara noted in her board application. "I believe that I can assist in making fund development processes efficient as well as help open doors to new revenue prospects."

Board Chair Brian Zachary commented, "Amara has a background full of non-profit and fundraising experience that I think will serve WCI well in the current situation and beyond." A total of 16 board members now serve WCI by setting policy and providing oversight and direction. Six new members were recruited after the board completed a self-evaluation and matrix exercise in November 2019. The assessment determined that more expertise was needed in the areas of finance, technology, agriculture, food production, tourism and human resources. More diversification in age and geographic representation was also identified as a goal. Board members serve a three-year term and meet quarterly, alternating between the Wallace House and the Country Life Center. 

Shared Use Kitchen responds to crisis



The Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen is supporting small food businesses by remaining open for operations. Additional precautions and procedures are in place to maintain food safety and public health. Kitchen Supervisor Mary Kapler is working closely with all renters to follow these stringent practices.

Early in March, the Mickle Center Shared-Use Commercial Kitchen, operated by The Wallace Centers of Iowa, changed operational policies due to the Covid-19 virus:

- Only one business works in the Kitchen at a scheduled time instead of multiple users sharing space as in the past
- In addition to regular cleaning and sanitation, a deep disinfection cleaning occurs between each food prep session
- The Kitchen is closed to the general public until further notice.

Kitchen Manager Mary Kapler pointed out, “It’s important that the Mickle Center Kitchen continues to operate during the pandemic. Several of our renters offer delivery or curbside meals to the public. One business, 5SPICE, was approached by the governor’s office to increase their daily meal preparation for 200 elderly Asians in Des Moines who rely on Medicaid. Lots of people are counting on us.”

Of the 20 or so businesses that utilize the Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen, eight are still operating delivery or curbside meals to go: Prep King Meals, Mac’d, 5SPICE, Dinner Dispatch, Mago’s Pizza DSM, Kettle/Black Teahouse, Hanna Valley Protein and Better Butter Bureau. 

Garden for Good continues in 2020



Farm Programs staff Vinh Nguyen (left) and Adam Main get the spring onions planted at the Country Life Center in April. They’ll turn their attention to the Garden for Good sweet potatoes at the end of May and are looking for volunteers.

side (dibblers are sharpened dowels used for digging holes). When laid on the ground and stepped on, they make three 1 1/4" holes 10" apart for the slips to go into.

Adam’s planned improvements include planting cover crops in the aisles to reduce the need for weeding and finding an implement to make harvest easier and quicker. He also sees the need for social distancing practices for volunteers and additional pre-harvest training to help volunteers sort potatoes. If you can volunteer, please contact Lisa at 641.337.5019. If you can financially contribute, please contact Ann at 515.243.7063 or anntaylor@wallace.org. 

One of WCI’s successful new ventures from 2019 will return in 2020 with some adjustments. The 2019 Garden for Good set aside one acre of ground at the Country Life Center to grow sweet potatoes for the Food Bank of Iowa. More than 50 volunteers donated their time to plant, tend and harvest about 8,000 pounds for food-insecure Iowans. Taking into account all of the production needs for 2020, this year’s Garden for Good goal is at least 5,000 pounds of sweet potatoes.

Farm Programs Manager Adam Main placed his order for 2,000 Covington sweet potato slips from Johnny’s Selected Seeds and purchased 1,700 lineal feet of black plastic mulch and drip tape for the beds. The slips are scheduled to be shipped the week of May 25 so he’ll be looking for volunteers to help get them in the ground. To make planting easier and faster, Adam has three 2 x 4 boards, each mounted with 3 homemade dibblers on one

Knock family sponsors prairie art



The Prairie Art Exhibit returns to the Country Life Center June 27 to August 29. Nearly 80 paintings were on display in 2019. This year's theme is "Pollinators". A one-day festival caps the display on Saturday, August 29.

"Pollinators". The 2' x 2' boards will be available to pick up at both WCI locations. See the article below for specific instructions. Volunteers are needed to put up/take down the display. A one-day festival on Saturday, August 29 at the Country Life Center will wrap up the exhibit with live music, guided prairie walks, food, art activities and an auction of the prairie art. If you can help with the Prairie Art events, please contact Deb at 641.337.5019. 

Back for its second year, our Prairie Art Exhibit will again display paintings from community members in the Country Life Center prairie this summer. The finished prairie paintings will be on display Saturday, June 27 thru Saturday, August 29 along the one mile prairie path. Exhibit hours are dawn to dusk each day. There is no charge to see the exhibit.

The Knock Family Charitable Fund is sponsoring this year's exhibit and festival. "A walk in the prairie at the Country Life Center is a lovely thing—bees buzzing, dragonflies flitting, birds chirping, grasses waving in the wind" explained Jan Knock. "The Prairie Art Exhibit invites us to share our expression of this natural beauty through the creation of art and to join in community as we celebrate these creations."

Community artists of all ages and skill levels are invited to paint a board for the exhibit, following this year's theme of

Grab a brush!



Create something beautiful and fun for our community during this uncertain time. We're inviting artists of all ages and skill levels to create paintings to be mounted in the prairie at the Country Life Center. Here's how to participate:

- Pick up a 2' x 2' board & entry form. To make arrangements, call Deborah at 515.243.7063 to pick up at the Wallace House or call Lisa at 641.337.5019 to pick up at the Country Life Center.
- Using "Pollinators" as a theme, create your work of art with acrylic paints. The most important pollinators in Iowa include bees, wasps, butterflies, and moths.
- Drop off your finished work with the entry form at either location by **June 5**.

Thanks to the Knock Family Charitable Fund, there is no charge to create an exhibit. For a \$10 donation, you can take your work home after the exhibit is over. 

kitchen inspiration



- HENRY A. WALLACE

Be inspired on a daily basis with this exclusive WCI tea towel featuring a quote from Henry A. Wallace. Henry provided the words; local artist Regan Doely of Doe a Deer Design in Stuart, IA turned them into a desirable take-home for friends, family and visitors. This was a best-seller at the Wallace House Holiday Boutique. \$12 each, available at both locations. Need it shipped? We can figure shipping costs based on the quantity you need. Call Deborah at 515.243.7063 or email her at deborahboyer@wallace.org. 

Pizza on the Prairie expands in season 2



Pizza on the Prairie is back in 2020, starting June 5 at the Country Life Center from 4:30 to 8 pm and continuing through September 25.

The successful Pizza on the Prairie test launch in September 2019 prompted WCI to expand from four weeks to 17 Friday night events in 2020. The current plan is to begin Pizza on the Prairie June 5 and continue each Friday night through the summer, ending September 25. Each week's menu will include two standard pizzas such as last year's Margherita and Veggie and Sausage, plus salads and desserts. One specialty pizza will change each week such as the popular Iowa Summer with applewood bacon, roasted corn, cherry tomatoes, quark cheese, and red sauce, topped with kale and roasted corn salad.

A review of 2019's test launch found that Pizza on the Prairie is unique to the area with the closest competitor a 2-hour drive away. Each week's experience attracted a growing, multi-generational audience from a wide area in central Iowa including Adair, Union, Dallas and

Polk counties. Pizza is a dish that can showcase the fresh produce grown on the farm and has low food costs. Overlapping Pizza on the Prairie with the Prairie Art Exhibit (scheduled for June 27 to August 29) enhances both experiences.

A total of \$15,000 is on hand as we launch a full season of this community event. Mid-American Energy is returning with a \$5,000 sponsorship. A \$5,000 grant from the Empowering Adair County Foundation will be used to purchase a portable trailer that blocks the nearly-constant wind from the brick oven. In addition, the Iowa Economic Development Authority is providing a \$5,000 grant to fund a social media campaign targeting young families in the Des Moines area. 🌿

Wallace House porch repairs

The Wallace House has a new porch roof thanks to a Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Over the years, the rubber membrane on the flat roof pulled away from the second story of the Wallace House, allowing rain to seep into the porch ceiling and windows below. When that was discovered in late 2018, a temporary foam material was applied (top left) to the gap to prevent further damage. When work began in October 2019, the Wood Roofing crew easily removed the thin membrane and water-soaked substrate (top right). Strong adhesive applied with a roller bonds the new materials together (bottom left). The new membrane extends several inches up the second story (bottom right) and is secured by adhesive, siding and trim. The porch ceiling will be replaced in 2020. All the work is under the volunteer guidance of preservation consultant Jack Porter. 🌿



Photos showing the scope of damage and repairs to the Wallace House front porch roof completed in November 2019. Funding in part from the IA Dept. of Cultural Affairs.



grant funded projects = big impact

Several grant-funded projects planned for 2020 will have a big impact on WCI's programs and facilities.

As part of the Prairie Art Exhibit and Festival funding from the Iowa Arts Council, staff are putting the finishing touches on a hanging exhibit designed for the Warren Cultural Center in Greenfield. Components include several of the 2' x 2' painted boards that were on display last year and large-scale photos of the prairie art in the prairie.

A new sign will be installed next to the Country Life Center garden plots with informational photos and text that help



Similar to the prairie info sign installed last year, a garden info sign is planned for the Country Life Center.

visitors better understand the connection between Henry A. Wallace's work and WCI's garden. Thanks to the Callum Foundation, this is a permanent addition.

Support from the Empowering Adair County Foundation will purchase a portable trailer to shield the Pizza on the Prairie's brick oven from the near-constant winds at the Country Life Center.

Replacing the porch ceiling at the Wallace House is a priority this year as the formerly leaky roof above caused it to sag (see page 5). Funds from the Neighborhood Investment Corporation and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs HRDP grant are supporting this fix. 🌿

new recurring giving, other options

Would you like to break down your contribution into smaller monthly payments? WCI donors can now choose to give automatically on an annual or monthly basis by using our easy and secure Donate page: <https://wallace.org/support/donate/>. One-time gifts are also accepted through this page for the Garden for Good or on-going operations. If you don't have access to the internet, staff can set this up for you upon request. As office staff are working from home now, we ask that you please leave a message at the Wallace House (515.243.7063) and we'll be in touch.

If you'd rather send a check for your support this year, simply fill out the form below and pop it in the mail.

All members receive invitations to programs and events, regular newsletters and giving acknowledgement. You can always choose to remain anonymous.

For long-term giving, please consider a bequest, also known as a planned gift. A bequest sets aside a portion or percentage of your estate for a cause that you care about. At WCI, bequests are added to one of our two endowment funds which are held at the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. Official bequest language is available on our Donate web site page. A call to your attorney can put the details in place.

Thank you for supporting WCI! 🌿

Count me in! Here's my 2020 contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please help us reduce mailing costs by providing your email address. WCI does not rent or sell its mailing list.

TYPE OF GIFT: (circle one)

• **Annual Gift Levels:**

- Grower (\$50) Believer (\$100)
- Thinker (\$250) Innovator (\$500)
- Dreamer (\$1,000+)

• **Endowment Funds:** Contact me with more information about a planned gift. *(no obligation)*

The Wallace Centers of Iowa | 756 16th St., Des Moines, IA 50314

Credit/debit card donations are also accepted via our web site: www.wallace.org/support/donate or by phone: 515.243.7063

farmhouse improvements

Now known as the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center, the birthplace farm of Henry A. Wallace was admitted to the National Register of Historic Places in November, 1974 as the “Wallace Farm” or “Catalpa Farm”. The application noted that while Uncle Henry “owned several farms in Adair County”, none were operated by family members until just-married Henry C. and May Wallace left Iowa State College in 1887 to try their luck. They lasted five years, increased their family with the addition of Henry A. and Annabelle, and returned to Ames so Henry C. could finish his degree. The National Register application included 200 acres, the farmhouse and the original barn, which was in great disrepair.

Historic buildings need constant attention. In summer 2019, a perpetually leaky roof in the farmhouse prompted WCI staff to approach retired state preservation architect Jack Porter for advice. Jack has a long track record of guidance and work at the Wallace House, starting before the initial restoration in the 1980s. On behalf of WCI, Jack applied for a Field Service Site Visit from the State Historical Society of Iowa. At no cost to WCI, Jack and fellow architect (and spouse) Martha Green evaluated the Gathering Barn and Farmhouse on October 9 and prepared a written report for the staff and board.

Overall, the two structures are in generally good condition, especially the barn. They recommended several improvements for the farmhouse that include the moving water away from the roof and foundation and improving ventilation in the basement. Staff are prioritizing the recommendations and putting together a fundraising plan, starting with a \$5,000 grant from the E.F. and Sylvia Schildberg Foundation. 

rhubarb transplants



It seems like people either love rhubarb or hate it. Well, we love it! Our “pie plant” at the Country Life Center has not been doing very well the last couple of years. Program Assistant Lisa Swanson put out a call for some rhubarb starts and several area neighbors answered: Peggy Delzell, Bev Rowe, Terry Sprague, Betsy Keenan, and Monica Huddleson. These starts are in their new bed and hopefully will be very happy. It will be a couple of years at least before we can harvest, but they will be waiting for us when the time is right. Thanks to all who shared their plants will us.

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Staff

Debra Houghtaling, CEO
debrahoughtaling@wallace.org

Deborah Boyer, Events Coordinator
deborahboyer@wallace.org

Mary Kapler
Shared Use Kitchen Manager
mcssharedusekitchen@gmail.com

Adam Main, Farm Programs Manager
adammain@wallace.org

Karey Meysenburg, Bookkeeper
kareymeysenburg@wallace.org

Katie Porter
Chef/Food Programs Manager
katieporter@wallace.org

Lisa Swanson
Program Assistant/Gift Shop Mgr.
lisaswanson@wallace.org

Ann Taylor
VP Marketing & Development
anntaylor@wallace.org

The Wallace Centers of Iowa
756 Sixteenth Street
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-243-7063
info@wallace.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

HELP US GO GREEN!

Send us your email address

2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

all scheduled events are dependent on up-to-date gathering guidelines

June 4	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 5	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 11	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 12	Hearts & Homes tea, WH, 11:30 am - 1 pm, \$25/person
June 12	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 18	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 19	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 25	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 26	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
June 27-Aug. 29	Prairie Art Exhibit, CLC, dawn to dusk daily
July 2	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 3	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 9	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 10	Hearts & Homes tea, WH, 11:30 am - 1 pm, \$25/person
July 10	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 16	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 17	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 23	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
July 24	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
August 6	Farm to Table Thursdays, WH, 5:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
August 7	Hearts & Homes tea, WH, 11:30 am - 1 pm, \$25/person
August 7	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus