

BIG AS A BARN NEWS

Enriching Community through Sustainable Food & Civility Initiatives

new & returning board members

Two community volunteers joined WCI's board of directors at its February meeting and four board members were re-appointed for another term. Those stepping onto the board include:

Sarah Bunch of Granular Ag in Johnston, IA has expertise in organic and commodity production agriculture, marketing, succession planning, talent development and agri-tourism that will serve

WCI well. Sarah commented, "For over a decade, I have worked in many facets of agriculture – from managing day-to-day operations of an organic CSA farm to managing channel marketing for an ag-tech company. I am excited to leverage my professional experiences and expertise to help WCI achieve its mission."

Michelle Wilson of Prescott, IA serves as executive director of the Southwest Iowa Workforce Development Board and is owner of Radiant Wellness Solutions. Michelle has many positive working relationships with local businesses and community organizations. She describes herself as "enthusiastic, energetic, and strives to bring groups of people together for a common



Sarah Bunch (left) of Granular Ag and Michelle Wilson with the Southwest Iowa Workforce Development Board joined WCI's board of directors on February 15.



purpose..."

Currently, 15 board members serve the organization by setting policy and providing oversight and direction. Six board members were recruited in 2020 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. With knowledge and experience in agriculture, agri-tourism, human resources and wellness, the new 2021 board members will continue to strengthen WCI's access to relevant expertise.

Returning board members include Jane Hatfield Anchustegui, Nicholas Devereux, Jay Howe and Jeff Wallace. Board members serve a three-year term and meet quarterly. In past years, in-person meetings alternate between the Wallace House and the Country Life Center. Since the pandemic began after the February 2020 meeting, board and staff have gathered virtually. 

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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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welcome, Jeff!



Farm Programs Manager Jeff Fairchild brings a wealth of experience.

New Farm Programs Manager Jeff Fairchild likes nothing better than farming. “I’ve always had a passion for farming, gardening, and educating others. I love spending time outdoors, especially in my garden. I feel a great sense of reward at the end of the season when my family can use the produce grown from my garden and when I can donate leftover produce to others.”

There’s no doubt that Jeff will pour that passion into the 4 acres of production garden and orchard at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center. Jeff brings a wealth of practical experience to The Wallace Centers of Iowa. Each year he maintains a large personal garden using organic practices. Jeff figured out early on that preventing plant diseases is easier than trying to cure them. He devoted hours of time reading gardening books and websites to learn about common diseases and how to identify them as well as using organic practices to prevent and treat them when necessary.

Jeff’s experience with safety measures and heavy equipment operation and maintenance will be invaluable at WCI. He’s trained employees on safely handling and operating equipment and responding appropriately to emergency situations. Besides growing produce for WCI’s two kitchens, one of Jeff’s projects will be to install the new geothermal greenhouse and begin produce production inside. Using the geothermal greenhouse and areas of the farm such as the Garden for Good, orchard and prairie, he’ll also have an opportunity to develop educational programs, field days and demonstrations for the public and targeted audiences. If you’re interested in helping Jeff on site as a volunteer, please contact him at 641.337.5019. 🌿

seeking intern



Farm interns learn the basics while making a big impact.

WCI is looking for a Farm Programs Intern to work at the Country Life Center this summer. A successful candidate will be interested in a hands-on learning experience in vegetable and fruit production for 10 to 14 weeks. The intern will help the Farm Programs Manager manage WCI’s vegetable/fruit production from 12 acres of tillable land and orchard for use by two kitchens and an on-site farm stand. This internship provides lots of opportunities for hands-on experiences with planting seeds, preparing plant beds, direct seeding and transplanting, weed and insect management, record keeping, produce harvesting and cleaning, orchard care and harvesting, and using and caring for tools.

The intern will participate in educational programming and special projects, one of which could be the construction of a geothermal greenhouse. The program includes visiting at least 3 other sustainable agriculture operations.

The position pays \$400-\$450/week and includes a one-year membership to Practical Farmers of Iowa, basic housing at no cost, and post internship career assistance. A complete position description and application is available on WCI’s website or by contacting Deb Houghtaling at debrahoughtaling@wallace.org or calling either location.

Farm Credit Services of America is helping to support this educational experience with a \$2,000 grant but more support is needed to cover full-time wages, staff instruction and professional opportunities. If you’re interested in supporting this important hands-on learning, please contact Ann at 515.243.7063 or mail a checks to 756 16th Street, Des Moines, IA 50314. Thank you! 🌿

7 classes to try

After a long cold winter, Chef Katie is eager to offer some fresh and flavorful spring cooking classes in a virtual format. Early in 2020, Katie realized that the pandemic would prevent her from teaching any in-person cooking classes at the Wallace House. She immediately embraced the online Zoom platform and her students have too. This series of seven new classes includes a class especially for kids with an adult. Register online or by calling 515.243.7063.

March 25: Beet + Pear = Dessert

You won't believe how beautiful and delicious dessert can be until you learn how to make this Beet Poached Pear with Mascarpone and Rosemary Shortbread Cookie. \$25/screen

April 1: Moroccan Favorites

"Travel" with Chef Katie without leaving your house as she teaches you how to prepare Chicken Pastilla with Apricot Chutney. \$25/screen

April 8: Middle Eastern Menu

Chef Katie's recipes for a Falafel Pita, Tahini Sauce, and Vegetable Slaw provide all the tastes of the Mid-East and are vegetarian to boot. \$25/screen

April 15: 3 Sauces Every Pro Knows

Professional chefs know that sauces are an easy way to elevate all kinds of dishes. Chef Katie will help you enhance your meals with Romesco, Italian Salsa Verde, and Rosemary Mustard sauces. \$25/screen

April 22: Kids in the Kitchen

Grab your kids and head into the kitchen for a fun family evening! Meatball Sandwiches with Tomato Sauce, Cheese, and Peppers are on the menu. Adult supervision is at your discretion: teens with experience might be OK on their own; pre-teens will probably need some guidance. Special price: \$20/screen

April 29: Spring Cocktails and Appetizers

Turn those fresh spring fruits and veggies into tasty adult beverages and appetizers! Katie covers a Cucumber Basil Gimlet, Rhubarb Spritzer, Asparagus Radish Tapenade and Tomato Peach Relish. \$25/screen

May 6: Gone Fishin'

Cooking fish can be tricky, but Katie will walk you through every step of a delicious Pan Roasted Salmon. Pair it with her Spring Panzanella Salad that readily adapts to all kinds of seasonal veggies. \$25/screen 

it's a party!



Katie Porter, Chef & Food Programs Manager - Wallace House

Can't get together in person with family or friends? Get everyone together via Zoom for a private cooking class! Chef Katie emails the recipe and a grocery and equipment list ahead of time, along with a Zoom link and helpful tips on getting connected. Participants gather all the ingredients and tools in their own kitchen, and then cook while Chef Katie demonstrates virtually. Private classes can accommodate up to 12 people.

Katie works with you to pick just the right topic for your group. For the 90-minute class, participants will need a computer, tablet or smartphone with an internet connection, speakers, microphone and webcam to learn new recipes and cooking techniques. With all of the online meetings and teaching that's been going on for the past year, many people have these tools readily available or can acquire them easily.

Call Katie at 515.243.7063 or email katieporter@wallace.org for all the details and to book your private class. 

"A private class with Chef Katie incorporates all the elements I value in a shared group experience: learning, connecting, asking, and laughing. One of our team members noted that 'the class was such a unique and thoughtful experience – a really wonderful way to come together as a team.' "—Eric T.

2021 prairie art needs your help



The 2021 Prairie Art Exhibit needs a theme and help preparing boards.

all the supplies for either step; you just provide the labor. The boards will be ready to prime in early spring and sealed before the exhibit is installed in June (dates TBD).

The exhibit will be open dawn to dusk each day throughout the summer. The 2021 Prairie Art Exhibit is supported in part by the Knock Family Charitable Fund. 

Planning for the 2021 Prairie Art Exhibit at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center is underway! We need your help in 2 ways:

- 1) **Got your thinking cap on?** We need your ideas for this year's theme! The 80 artists who design and paint each 2' x 2' board for display in the 9-acre restored prairie follow the year's theme. Themes need to relate to prairies in some way and be broad enough that artists of all ages and skill levels can successfully create a board. "Wildflowers" was our first theme in 2019 and "Pollinators" in 2020.
- 2) **Got some time on your hands?** Every one of the 80 boards needs to be primed on all sides before artists create their work, and then sealed before they are mounted in the prairie. We'll provide

Contact Deb Houghtaling at 641-745-7774 with your theme idea or to volunteer. You can also email her at debrahoughtaling@wallace.org.

final farmhouse renovations pending



The Farmhouse is waiting for shingles, a fresh coat of paint and a few other tasks to complete its renovation.

Zachary of Creston, BwT Remodeling of Greenfield is implementing the work plan. To date skilled workers have replaced the roof, repaired a chronic leak in the plumbing, installed an accessible water shut-off, connected the main sidewalk and ramp with a new section of sidewalk, installed historically-appropriate windows, added a moisture barrier and applied new wood siding, repaired damage from a tree limb and improved exterior lighting for increased safety. 

Thanks to many generous donors, the Farmhouse at the Country Life Center is looking better than ever! In late 2019, historic preservation consultants Jack Porter and Martha Green spent several hours assessing the Farmhouse and developed a detailed report outlining its critical needs. They were worried about a chronic leak in the roof damaging the one-story addition, pest infestation, missing downspouts, siding deterioration, and windows that are not historically appropriate for the building.

Several donors eagerly responded to our call for help in 2020. More than \$40,000 in private donations leveraged a matching grant from the State of Iowa's Historic Resource Development Program for exterior and interior renovations. Under the guidance of historic preservation consultant Brian

"Work on the house has gone very smoothly. The biggest challenge was getting the supplies because of the pandemic. The windows took about 7 weeks, compared to 3-4 weeks typically. Hopefully we will have a good spring to finish up with the roof and painting."—Brian Thompson, BwT Remodeling

2020 donors made all the difference

As we responded to the pandemic by implementing new protocols, adopting new technologies and developing new programs, our donors were with us every step of the way with their encouragement, understanding and financial support. Thank you to each and every one of them for partnering with WCI to meet the challenges of 2020. If we have made any errors, please let us know so we can correct our records.

Adair Soil & Water Conservation District	Frederick Family Trust	Michelle Messer
Amanda James	Fritz Wehrenberg & Jennie LeGates	Mid American Energy
Amara Huffine	Gail Turner	Nancy Forrest
Amy Zeigler	Gary Schwartz	Neighborhood Investment Corp
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Anonymous 2	Iowa Cultural Heritage Fund	Peggy Delzell
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Chuck & Marilyn Farr	John & Christine Augustine	Sandi Hamilton
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Connie Tadlock	John & Christine Fleming Halbrook	Sarah Bunch
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Diane Glass & Jeff Means	Judy McGhee	Shirley & Delon Weuve
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Fran Ganoe	Leon Schwartz	Wallace Genetic Foundation
	Linda & David Gobberdiel	Wallace Global Fund
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	Mark Hill & Amy Anderson	Shaw Media
	Mark Stadlander	The Meyocks Group
	Marla Naumann	
	Marlene Schildberg	
	Martha Carr	
	Maynes Law Office	

meyocks partnering with WCI

WCI is working on a **new brand identity and strategy**, thanks to a commitment of **\$35,000 in pro bono services** from The Meyocks Group. CEO Doug Jeske and Account Manager Katie Schetzslsle



Branding, advertising and marketing agency The Meyocks Group of West Des Moines is spearheading a new brand identity and logo for WCI.

addition, Doug introduced us to Copper Cross whiskey, distilled here in Iowa, that we are using in our new **Whiskey Apple Butter** and **donated 4 cases of product.**

are interviewing 10 stakeholders to gather brand perceptions. Meyocks will analyze the feedback and develop recommendations and a **new logo** that will be presented to the board of directors for approval. They will also design **new packaging** for our Abundance products. Their support also includes a **\$4,000 annual gift towards the Garden for Good** for the next 3 years (2021-2023) plus volunteer service in the garden. In

Located in West Des Moines, the Meyocks (“meeks”) Group is a full-service branding, advertising and marketing agency that focuses on food, agriculture, health and mentor brands. WCI is honored to partner with them on multiple levels as they purposefully seek out clients who are committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of their customers. Thank you, Meyocks! 

giving now will provide programs later

Now more than ever, WCI needs donations from our patrons and supporters. Like many other nonprofits, in-person program and rental income has drastically decreased because of COVID concerns. We’re investing time and resources into developing new online programming and planning for better times in 2021. We’re also taking care of some repairs and improvements on our historic properties.

the internet, staff can set this up for you upon request. Staff are rotating in and out at the Wallace House now during business hours. You can also leave a message at 515.243.7063 and we’ll be in touch.

You can 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

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.

Donations from individuals are vital to WCI’s financial health and well-being. Thank you for your continued interest and support of WCI! 

Count me in! Here’s my 2021 contribution

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State: _____
Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

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)*

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

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

shared kitchen is social

In the four years since the Mickle Center Shared-Use Commercial Kitchen opened, social media platforms have become the primary method of marketing and advertising for its 24 food entrepreneurs. Integrating Facebook and Instagram into a business website not only increases social media presence, but sales as well.



Louis Tan, Oishii Ramen

Oishii Ramen operates a pop-up restaurant on Saturdays at the Mickle Center Kitchen and uses social media extensively to attract and communicate with customers. “Social media posts have given Oishii Ramen attention,” noted owner Louis Tan. “We have noticed a spike in website views, inquiries, follows to our Facebook page, and interactions. It made us realize the power of word-of-mouth, even in a pandemic. We have sold out twice and many customers have been inquiring on ‘squeezing their order in’ or asking about when the next one [pop-up market] is. It has given us more motivation and satisfaction in knowing that Oishii Ramen is being recognized. Many people are wanting to try our ramen and also come back for more.”



Madeline Krantz, New World Kitchen

These sentiments are echoed by other Mickle Center Kitchen businesses. “Website integration with Instagram and Facebook makes for immediate purchases,” explained Madeline Krantz, owner of **New World Kitchen**. “I have definitely seen sales increase with this. Social media is the biggest way to get the word out.” Madeline offers a vegan menu and sells direct-to-consumer.

Covid-19 has altered how many Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen business operate and social media has helped them adjust. Dionne Sama, co-owner of



Dionne Sama, Palm's Caribbean Cuisine

Palm's Caribbean, says social media is their primary marketing format. “It has helped get our business up and running. Sharing [Facebook] posts immediately increases business and sales.” Typically, Palm's can be found at the summer Downtown Des Moines Farmers market and various events through out the metro. At the current time, they offer pop-ups at the Mickle

Center as well as catering private events.

Formerly a nursing home, the Robert W. Mickle Neighborhood Resource Center in Sherman Hill now houses several small businesses and nonprofit organizations and the Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen. WCI is the operational manager for the Kitchen. 

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Preservationist & Owner, Create Creston

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

HELP US GO GREEN!
Send us your email address

2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

indoor events are canceled thru June 2021

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 25 | Online Cooking Class: Beet + Pear = Dessert, \$25 |
| April 1 | Online Cooking Class: Moroccan Favorites, \$25 |
| April 8 | Online Cooking Class: Middle Eastern Menu, \$25 |
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| May 6 | Online Cooking Class: Gone Fishin', \$25 |