

THE WALLACE CENTERS OF IOWA
DES MOINES · RURAL ORIENT

BIG AS A BARN NEWS

Enriching Community through Sustainable Food & Civility Initiatives

WCI awarded \$41k grant

WCI received a \$41,055 State of Iowa Historical Resource Development Program grant in July to repair and improve the farmhouse at Vice President Henry A. Wallace’s birthplace farm.

The grant was one of only 32 statewide projects to receive funding from the State Historical Society of Iowa, which seeks to preserve historical collections, invest in communities through historic preservation, and promote Iowa history. The grant is a one-to-one match, meaning that WCI will need to raise an additional \$41,055 to complete the project. About \$24,000 is remaining to meet the match.

“These critical grant funds help sustain art, heritage and cultural vibrancy across Iowa, showcasing world-class cultural programs and destinations and the talents and skills of our state’s hard-working artists, historic caretakers and business owners,” said Chris Kramer, director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Project work will include fixing a leaky roof and replacing vinyl-clad windows and cement siding with



Critical improvements on the Farmhouse at the Country Life Center will get a financial boost from a State of Iowa historic preservation grant.

historically-appropriate materials. The project is expected to begin in August and be completed in spring 2021.

Historic preservationist Brian Zachary of Creston is volunteering his time to oversee the work, making sure that materials and repairs follow the Secretary of the Interior preservation guidelines. BwT Remodel

of Greenfield is the general contractor. Specialty work will be done by Wilson Electric of Orient and Schultz Plumbing in Greenfield.

“Dating from the 1880s, the Farmhouse is the oldest building at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center and key to creating a special sense of place and setting on the property,” noted Deb Houghtaling, President & CEO. “These repairs will greatly improve its overall stability, appearance and operations.” Anyone interested in contributing towards the required match should contact Ann Taylor, VP, Marketing & Resource Development at 515.971.1512. Gifts of all sizes are welcome. More information about the Iowa Dept. of Cultural Affairs is available at 515-281-5111. 

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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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new! picnic theater programs at CLC



Paxton Williams as scientist George Washington Carver.

Paxton Williams of Des Moines will present *“Listening to the Still Small Voice”* on Sunday, August 30 at the Country Life Center. The play describes the life and work of **George Washington Carver** (circa 1864-1943) including how his birth in slavery, struggle for an education and love of nature led him to become one of the most influential and inspiring renaissance men of the 20th century. Williams covers Carver’s time in Iowa, beginning in 1888 in Winterset, his studies at Simpson College and Iowa State College, and his friendships with Uncle Henry, Henry C., and Henry A. Wallace.

Paxton Williams is an attorney and actor/playwright who believes in the power of stories to inspire, connect, and transform. Williams authored *“Listening to the Still Small Voice”* in 2000, and has performed it more than 400 times in the U.S. and England. From 2005-2009, Williams was executive director of the George Washington Carver Birthplace Association. He served recently as associate producer for the regional Emmy-nominated Iowa PBS documentary on Carver and was the content expert on the National Geographic Readers book on Carver. A graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, Williams also holds degrees in political science, communication studies, and public policy from Iowa State University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Birmingham in England.



Actor Tom Williams returns to WCI as artist Grant Wood.

Tom Milligan will portray Iowa native **Grant Wood** during his performance of *“Grant Wood: Prairie Rebel”* on Sunday, September 27 at the Country Life Center. Grant Wood chats with the audience in this one act show, as if talking to an old friend across the backyard fence, or maybe at his home at Five Turner Alley in Cedar Rapids. He tells us about his life and how he changed the art world forever with his work. It is the man behind American Gothic that we hear and see, and the story of how he took the moments, the memories, and the people of our state, and showed the whole world the specialness of this place, Iowa.

Performer Tom Milligan has spent 45 years as a working theater artist in Iowa. As an actor, director, scenic designer and producer, his work has been seen throughout the Midwest, especially at the Des Moines Playhouse, Ingersoll Dinner Theater, The Drake Opera Theater, Hoyt Sherman Place, The Drama Workshop and other venues in the Des Moines area. In 2005 he moved to the Amana Colonies, working on multiple productions at the Old Creamery Theater and the Iowa Theater Artists Company, plus

many self-produced productions.

Tickets include a gourmet brown bag lunch with **ham and apple sandwich** (*Des Moines Bacon Co. smoked ham, roasted apples, herb quark cheese, tetragonia on a ciabatta bun*) **potato salad** (*red potatoes, green beans, cherry tomatoes, herbs*) and **apple crisp** (*Red Free apples, oat crumble*) and bottled water. Additional drinks (soda, wine and beer) can be purchased on site. Sorry, no outside food or drink. If you have dietary restrictions, please contact Chef Hans in advance by email (hanswalsh@wallace.org) or phone (641.337.5019). **Tickets are required and can be purchased thru WCI’s web site: www.wallace.org.** If you need assistance, please contact Lisa at 641.337.5019.

Doors open at 4:30 pm. Social distancing practices will be observed; please wear a mask when checking in and inside our buildings. We recommend bringing your own lawn chairs/blankets. Patrons will be assigned a seating area on the lawn in advance in order of purchase date. Tickets purchased as a group will be seated together. If you need to be socially distant within your group (such as separate households), please purchase tickets in multiple transactions.

Both performances begin at 5:15 pm. Paxton and Tom will be available for questions and discussion after their respective performances. The gift shop inside the Barn will remain open after the show. 

prairie art on display, festival canceled



Visitors walk past one of the more than 75 Prairie Art paintings at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center. The free exhibit is on display through August 29.

The Prairie Art Exhibit is the perfect art installation during this time of social distancing. More than 75 paintings are displayed in 9 acres of wide-open Iowa prairie at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center. Amateur artists of all ages and skill levels created the works of art following this year's theme of "Pollinators". The 2' x 2' paintings of butterflies, bees, moths, wasps, hummingbirds and other pollinators are mounted on fence posts along the one-mile walking path. Artists from towns and cities such as Des Moines, Urbandale, Greenfield, Creston, Fontanelle, Casey, Winterset, and Orient all contributed to the project, now in its second year. The one-day Prairie Art Festival, planned for August 29, is canceled due to COVID-19.

people were isolating themselves. Several parents were looking for things for their kids to do and this project was the right thing at that time."

"We've seen paintings created by many more youth artists this year," commented Deb Houghtaling, President & CEO. "We were seeking artists to paint boards about the same time as

The exhibit is open dawn to dusk each day through August 29. Restrooms are available when the farm buildings are open, usually Monday – Friday 9 am to 3 pm. Pizza on the Prairie patrons can also walk through the exhibit during Fridays 5 pm to 8:30 pm.

"Prairies are important ecosystems that hold soil in place, keep water clean and provide pollinator habitat," Houghtaling explained. "Henry A. Wallace recognized the critical need for grasses in soil conservation efforts. Our restored prairie is an important feature at his birthplace farm and the themed artwork compliments that." 

Garden for Good secures sponsors



Farm Programs Manager Adam Main hauls part of last year's sweet potato crop to storage before donation to the Food Bank of Iowa. Volunteers will be needed to gather this year's crop.

Good news! WCI's 2020 Garden for Good is yielding more than just sweet potatoes for the Food Bank of Iowa. New support for the project includes a \$1,000 grant from West Bank for this year's efforts. Now in its second year of production, we know the Garden for Good will continue for several years into the future. A new partnership with Meyocks Group, Inc. in West Des Moines includes a \$4,000 annual gift towards the Garden for Good for the next 3 years (2021-2023).

Farm Programs Manager Adam Main is not expecting a bumper crop this year, but he believes that harvest will be close to our goal of 5,000 pounds, assuming that the sweet potatoes will size up in the next few weeks. He recently dug up a healthy-looking mature plant and harvested 2#. Adam reports that insect pressure hasn't been too bad as he's sprayed an organic pesticide the few times he's noticed leaf damage. The crop is expected to mature mid-September, well before any frost and cold is expected at the beginning of October. Volunteers

will be needed to harvest and sort the crop. A few volunteers to prep for harvest would be helpful as well with tasks such as washing totes, cutting vines, and hauling supplies out to the field. An online volunteer sign-up (Sign-up Genius) will be emailed as harvest time nears. All volunteer opportunities will include social distancing protocols. 

pizza on the prairie a big hit



“This experience sums up what it means to live in Iowa...”

That’s a comment from one of our many Pizza on the Prairie patrons. Folks from all around central and southwest Iowa have made the jaunt to the Country Life Center each Friday night beginning on June 26. To date, all events have been sold out.

Pizza on the Prairie features brick oven pizza made with toppings from our garden, live music, outdoor art & the Iowa prairie. Vegetable sides, desserts, beer, wine and soft drinks are also available. Online ticket reservations with a small deposit holds your space.

Tickets for each Pizza on the Prairie event have been sold out since the 2020 season began on June 26.

In response to the coronavirus, WCI staff carefully planned check-in, ordering, food delivery and facility cleaning. After

testing safety protocols with a limited audience, WCI carefully increased the number of tickets available at each event, going on now through September 25.

Lead sponsors include MidAmerican Energy, Empowering Adair County Foundation & Farmers Electric Cooperative. A grant from Travel Iowa is supporting a social media campaign with influencers from the Des Moines metro called “hummingbirds”. WCI added more than 230 social media followers since the campaign began. Live music sponsorships include FNB Bank, Coon Valley Telephone Association and Maynes Law Office. 

pizza trailer



We can’t be more pleased with our new Pizza on the Prairie trailer supported in part by Empowering Adair County Foundation! Fox Welding customized it to fit our needs and Etc. Graphics wrapped it with stunning graphics that promote the event and WCI in just a few words.

The trailer was critical in our efforts to expand Pizza on the Prairie from a test launch of just 4 events in 2019 to 14 in 2020. It shields the Pizza on the Prairie’s brick oven from the elements and stores all of the equipment needed each week. 

pizza tees



Pizza on the Prairie patrons can now take home an event T-shirt to remember their wonderful outing. On Friday nights, you can spot our staff sporting bright turquoise shirts with the same design. The kelly green shirts come in youth and adult sizes for just \$15 each. Patrons can order T-shirts along with their event tickets, or pick one up in the temporary gift shop inside the Gathering Barn. 

new staff expands WCI capacity



New Program Coordinator
Julia Weisshaar-Mullin

Julia Weisshaar-Mullin of Creston recently joined WCI as its first dedicated Program Coordinator. Weisshaar-Mullin is tasked with managing and expanding existing programs and building new programming, especially online learning as a response to the coronavirus pandemic. “I’m looking forward to joining the

team at WCI and explore the many opportunities for programming that will interest and engage everyone who comes to a historic site or visits us online.” Weisshaar-Mullin and her family have participated in WCI programs for years.

“We’re excited to have Julia bring her education, community and arts experience as our first dedicated program coordinator,” noted Deb Houghtaling, President & CEO. “WCI is committed to increasing our educational and experiential offerings and look forward to bringing additional programming to the community.”

Weisshaar-Mullin has extensive educational experience as a PK-12 vocal and instrumental music teacher and talented and gifted educator, and high school and community theater instructor. She holds a Bachelors of Music Education from the University of Kansas and is on track to receive her Masters of Music from Simpson College in 2021. Julia is based at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center and will also be involved with programming at the Wallace House in Des Moines. 🌿



Hans Walsh, new Chef/ Food Programs Manager at CLC

Hans Walsh is the new Chef/Food Programs Manager at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center. Hans has more than 20 years of experience in restaurants and kitchens in Iowa and Arizona, including his family’s restaurant, the Irish Shanti, in Gunder, IA.

More recently, Walsh co-founded, managed and cooked at Milk and Honey, a farm to table restaurant in Harlan, IA. Coincidentally, the restaurant occasionally featured produce grown at the Country Life Center and distributed through Farm Table Delivery, a small business that connects producers to restaurants and institutions.

Hans is joining long-time Chef Katie Porter who concentrates on food programming at the Wallace House in Des Moines. “I’m excited to be a part of the great team at WCI,” noted Walsh, “And look forward to cooking for both local residents and travelers.”

“We’re delighted to have Hans join WCI and bring his experience and relationships in local foods to the kitchen at the Country Life Center,” commented Deb Houghtaling, President & CEO. Walsh will be responsible for Pizza on the Prairie, Abundance food items and program/private event foods. 🌿

grant for increased safety & security



The W.T. and Edna M. Dahl Trust is supporting WCI with a \$10,000 grant for safety and security improvements at both historic locations. Priority projects may include enhanced outdoor lighting and new Gathering Barn basement doors at the Country Life Center and gutter repairs outside the kitchen at the Wallace House. This support is much appreciated. 🌿

be the butterfly!

One new feature at the Country Life Center that's getting a lot of attention is our butterfly selfie background. Located across the sidewalk from the Farmhouse, nearly everyone visiting the Prairie Art Exhibit or attending Pizza on the Prairie has to walk by. Young and old are stopping to pose in front of the unique board as a reminder of their visit.

Painted by high school senior Eleanor Gaul, the board measures 6' x 8' and is mounted on a frame



Pollinators and prairie plants inspired high school senior Eleanor Gaul's butterfly board, which was installed on June 23 at the Country Life Center.

constructed by her dad Mike Gaul. Eleanor drew her inspiration from the Prairie Art Exhibit "Pollinator" theme and also wanted to draw attention to Iowa's native prairie plants. The wings of the butterfly include 8 different prairie plant species. The project took about 40 hours to complete. Eleanor applied that time to her school silver cord requirements. She's also volunteering at most of the Pizza on the Prairie events. Stop by and see her work! Her board will remain on display through the fall. 🦋

your gift is much appreciated

Now more than ever, WCI needs donations from our patrons and supporters. Like many other nonprofits, we're investing a great deal of time and resources into making sure our programs and services are meeting this moment: moving programs outdoors, developing new online programming, and implements safety protocols. We're also using this time to take care of some needed repairs and improvements on our historic properties.

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 the internet, staff can set this up for you upon request. As office staff are often working from home, 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.

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 2020 contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

shared use kitchen



Did you know? Three Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen businesses: Palm's Caribbean Cuisine, 5 Spice Sisters (pictured above) and Prep Kings are part of DSM EATS, a free meal service organized by Central Iowa Shelter & Services. This community program is a response to the economic situation resulting from COVID-19.

Operated by WCI, the Mickle Center Shared Use Kitchen in Des Moines supports several local food businesses, three of which are owned by immigrants and people of color, including 5 Spice Sisters. If you're in the DSM area, consider supporting Palm's Caribbean Cuisine, 5 Spice Sisters and Lumpia & Co. For questions about the kitchen, contact Kitchen Manager Mary Kapler at 515.282.4715.

Board of Directors

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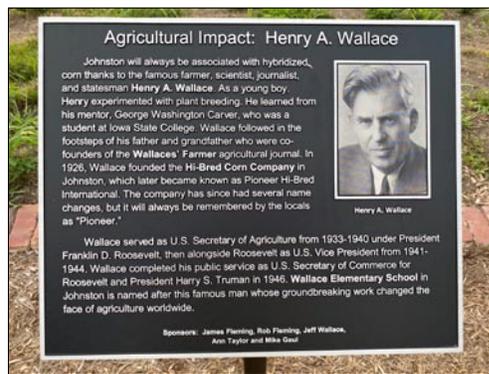
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HAW part of Scout project



Jake Wicks of Johnston, IA (pictured above left with parents Warren and Christie) secured his Eagle Scout status with a project that includes a nod to Henry A. Wallace. Wicks designed, secured funding and built a historic walk honoring several notable area residents, the most prominent being Henry A. Wallace (plaque pictured above right). The historic walk is located between the Simpson House and Barn, near the Johnston Public Library. Wallace family members who financially supported the project include Jim Fleming, Rob Fleming and Jeff Wallace. Congratulations to Jake on his outstanding accomplishment.

2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*all scheduled events are dependent on up-to-date gathering guidelines
indoor events are canceled thru September 30*

August 21	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
August 28	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
August 30	Picnic Theater: George Washington Carver, CLC, 4:30 - 7 pm
Sept. 4	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
Sept. 11	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
Sept. 14	Online Cooking Class: Umami Flavorings
Sept. 18	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
Sept. 25	Pizza on the Prairie, CLC, 4:30 - 8 pm, changing menus
Sept. 27	Picnic Theater: Grant Wood, CLC, 4:30 - 7 pm
Oct. 5	Online Cooking Class: Love Your Veggies
Nov. 23	Online Cooking Class: Holiday Appetizers & Decorating Tips