

From the Director's Desk

What a year it has been! To say that Backus is a busy place is an understatement. As I look ahead, there is no sign of life slowing down. There are many opportunities taking shape that position Backus for continued growth and change in 2022, and I'm excited to be a part of it all. As always, we can't make it happen without the support of the dedicated staff, volunteers, Backus members, and our community.

Here are some updates from this past quarter that I want to share with you:

- To date in 2021, we have served **24,872** free, hot, nutritious **meals** to guests at **Community Café**.
 - ~ That is the equivalent of serving dinner every night to a family of four for the next 17 years.
 - ~ It is also enough meals to have served four dinners to every citizen of International Falls this year.Please check our website (www.backusab.org) for more information or to learn how you can help.
- Backus is partnering with the local Veteran Services Officer and the team at the Koochiching County Historical Museum to create a **Veterans Memorial Showcase** in Backus. The cabinetry will be on the first floor at Backus so everyone has easy access to enjoy it.
- **The Backus Music Program** is taking shape and holds promise for good things for people of all ages. Plans are to offer workshops and music lessons that are geared to enrich lives and to prompt discovery and learning for all.
- On December 14, **YouTube** Creators reported to us that people watched KCC-TV YouTube clips **more than 27,600 times** in 2021! These viewers were from the United States, Canada, and from the United Kingdom. We are thrilled to be bringing coverage of local events to so many people on KCC-TV Channel 7 and with our YouTube internet availability.
- KOOTASCA and Citizens for Backus/AB, Inc., continue to wait for the decision to be communicated from the Minnesota Housing Board of Directors regarding the funding application submitted by KOOTASCA to purchase the **Alexander Baker School** and proceed with the affordable housing project. We should hear their determination by the end of January, 2022.

In the midst of all of the daily happenings and the improvements and changes, there is something else that is happening within Backus. It isn't something you can touch, but it is something very real. People are very much at home here. Now, I think people have always felt welcome here, *but it's changing some how*. Just today, a group of teens came in and went straight to the gym to shoot hoops. They know they are welcome here, so they come often and they bring friends. I'm really good with that. Last week an elderly man came to Backus because he needed to be around people and he knew Backus is safe and that he would get help if he needed it. And he did need it. And we were here. People come here to celebrate events with friends. People gather here to help each other through difficult times. People come here because there is always something going on. People come to learn. To get their steps in. To get food. They stop in to rest as they walk to their destinations. People know that if you need information or a resource, the people at Backus can help. This is a good place to be.

The goal at Backus for 2022 is to continue to nourish our community through sound programs and offerings. We will continue to foster an environment where people are treated with kindness and respect. Whatever brings you through our doors, please know that you are most welcome here.

Historic Backus Community Center, the heart of International Falls, where all generations celebrate arts, culture, recreation, wellness, and life-long learning.

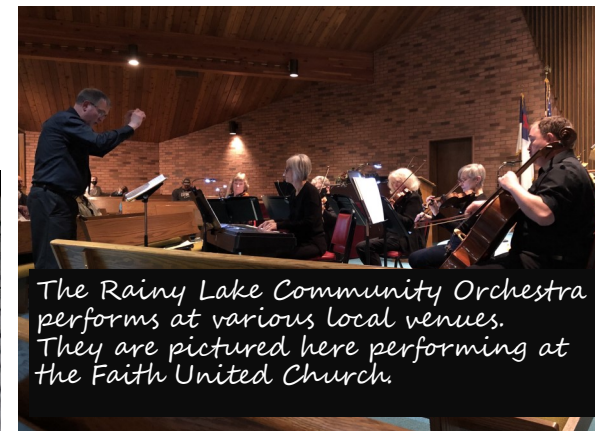
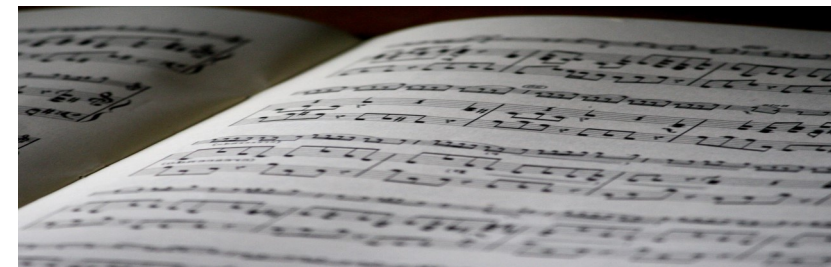
Lois Lundin, Executive Director

Rainy Lake Community Orchestra

Backus's room 303 is the new "home" for the Rainy Lake Community Orchestra, and we are thrilled! Peggy Kelly, RLCO Board President, shared: "The Rainy Lake Community Orchestra brings members of our community and region together in the joy of making music and sharing it with our community. Working together with the Backus Music Program supports our efforts and expands our opportunities."



Orchestra members have been busy settling in to their new space. The chairs are placed, the music stands are positioned, and the conductor's platform is set. There is a vast selection of music available, all of which had to be carefully sorted and catalogued. The orchestra practices on Monday evenings at 5:30 and welcomes new members of all ages. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Joe Belanger at 218-240-4484. This group has a great time together.

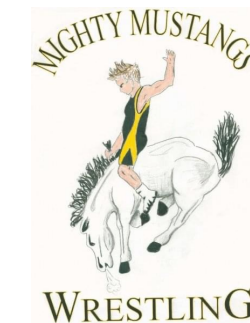
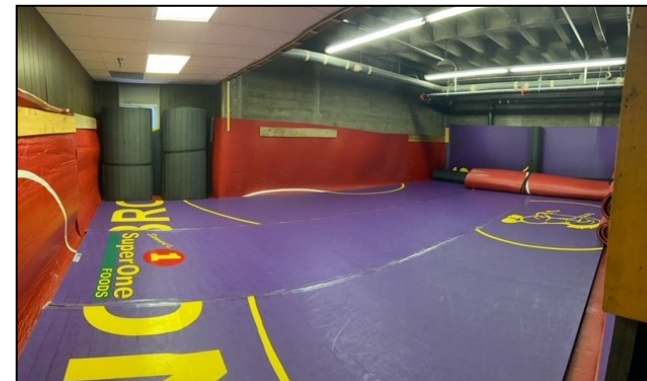


The Rainy Lake Community Orchestra performs at various local venues. They are pictured here performing at the Faith United Church.

Mighty Mustang Wrestlers are in the house



Backus is happy to extend a welcome to Mighty Mustang Wrestling! Wrestling provides a positive outlet for kids who have a lot of energy. While it is an individual sport, it teaches teamwork and the importance of working together. Wrestling doesn't put any child "on the bench"; there is room for every child to participate! The wrestling team hits the mats in a newly created space in the lower level of Backus. We are proud to have them here!



Find Mighty Mustang Wrestling on facebook.

A Fond Farewell to Kay Arnold

It was with mixed emotion that family and friends gathered in the Backus Dining Room on October 10 to wish Kay Arnold the very best as she set off to her new home in the Twin Cities. Kay was one of the core team members who rallied support within our community to save the Backus/AB buildings from demolition.



Kay's commitment held strong for the many years that it took to convince local officials of the importance and significance of the buildings. Kay's work was far from finished when the keys were securely placed in her hands. Kay remained active on the Backus Board for many years and contributed to the great success of the community center that we all enjoy today.

Thank you Kay. There aren't words to explain the value of what you did. Thank you for being so persistent in pursuing your dream and bringing your vision to life!



Backus gifts a piano to Faith United Church

In September 2021, the Backus Community Center presented the gift of a Kimball grand piano to the people of the Faith United Church. The piano had been gifted to Backus and was located in a large first floor meeting room. It is a beautiful instrument but was rarely played, so the piano was listed for sale. When it was discovered that the neighboring church had a need, Backus saw an opportunity to share the gift of music.



Watch for musical performances to be scheduled in partnership at both Backus and the Faith United Church.



Safety updates

New continuous hand rails were handcrafted and installed on the east side of Backus by Dan Benedix and Kari Gansch. New LED lighting was installed by Davis Electric. We are very pleased with these safety improvements for our Backus guests!





Fall Fantasia

A Community Event was held at the Faith United Church on Saturday, November 13, 2021. The audience was entertained by live performances from the following local artists:

Joe Belanger
 Darcy Sullivan
 Kathy Tompkins
 Kelly Langton-Antin
 Jesse Laurion
 Kathy Thureen
 Youth violin students
 Peggy Kelly
 Rainy Lake
 Community Orchestra

Sponsored by:
 Faith United UCC
 and
 Backus
 Community
 Center



Holiday Concert

Presented by:

The
 Rainy
 Lake
 Community
 Orchestra

December 10

People from our community gathered at Backus on Friday, December 10, to enjoy a beautiful array of holiday tunes performed by local artists:

- * Borderland Youth Strings
- * Rainy Lake Community Orchestra
- * Sloughgrass
- * Rainy Lake Handbell Ensemble
- * Rainy Lake Community Chimes

The evening ended with a community sing-along and a very feisty indoor “snowball” fight! A good time was had by all!



There is still time to contribute to **feed just one.** Every dollar helps.

Contributions to **feed just one** in memory of:

- Henry & Avis Haugland* - from Martin & Gretchen Plantenberg
- John Gearhart* - from Emmi Lattu
- Marlys Imhof* - from Ron & Wanda Pelland
- Eileen Kirk* - from Pat Ettestad and Ron & Wanda Pelland
- Fred Lane* - from Ron & Wanda Pelland
- Leona Larson* - from Ron & Wanda Pelland and John & Karen Wilson
- Donna Woods Magel* - from Gail Costley
- Linda Merrill* - from Tom & Jane Barthell, Mike & Louise Boestler, Kim & Janie Brown, Beckie Campbell, Daryl & Shirley Deno, Bonnie Erickson, Betty Ericson, Rick & Lou Anne Faulkner, Genevieve Fisher, Sue Foran, Carol Haseley, Peggy Kelly, Jessie Laurion, Chuck & Beverly Leistico, Jim & Jill Malone, Jim & Kathy McDaniel, Mike & Deborah McDaniel, Rosemary Merrill, Ward Merrill, Peter & Durayne Mitby, Jim & Jeannine Nelson, Tom & Pat Nendick, Mark & Beverly Oszman, Douglas & Sharon Schaefer, and Dennis Vohler
- Sherry Misner* - from Ron & Wanda Pelland
- Tammie Nass* - from Ron & Wanda Pelland
- Mary L. Pearson* - from Byrne & Carole Johnson



PayPal



Scan. Pay. Go.

“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”

~Mother Teresa



Contributions to **feed just one**, continued from page 4

<p>Did you know: \$40.00 will feed one person for a month. \$200.00 will feed five people for a month. \$960.00 will feed a single mom and her child for a year. \$2,400.00 will feed a family of five for a year. \$5,000.00 will cover the cost of 1,250 meals.</p>	<p>How can you make a contribution?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop by the Backus Office to drop off a donation. 2. Send a check to Backus at 900 5th Street, Int'l Falls MN 56649 3. Call the Backus Office at 218-285-7225 to use your credit card 4. On your smartphone, Scan the QR code on page 4 to go to the Backus PayPal site.
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Gale Aklestad
 American Family Insurance
 Susan Anderson
 Anonymous
 Larry & Sonja Arch
 Darell Bradley & Patti Ballan
 Tom & Jane Barthell
 Jay & Julie Bartkowski
 Harry & Sally Batdorf
 Lynn & Carol Belanger
 Pat & Richard Bjorum
 Cathy Blankman
 Border Bank
 Les & Molly Bragg
 Bremer Bank Employee Charity
 Amy Brenengen
 Amy Callaway
 Aaron & Gloria Carew
 Dr. Michael & Loretta Carney
 Greg & Sheryl Christianson
 Margaret & Milo Christianson
 Marty & Angie Cody
 Dennis & Nettie Coleman
 Susan Congrave
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 Carolyn Davison
 Roxanne Skogstad-Ditch & Leon Ditch
 Jim & Joann Dornhecker
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 Northern Reliable Insurance
 Jenell Feller & David Olson
 John & Judy Olson
 Wade & Carol Pavleck
 Peter Graham Auxiliary VFW #2948

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 Ranier Rec Club
 Robert & Toni Rapaway
 Eric Ssolovjovs
 Renaissance Charitable Foundation
 Tami Renollet
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 Mary & James Rolando
 Ginger Romoz
 Member of Rotary Club -Int'l Falls
 Rotary Club -Int'l Falls
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 Corky & Shar Schaak
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 Steven & Garner Wiley
 Mike & Mary Williams
 Bruce & June Wilson
 John & Karen Wilson
 Kimberly & Trent Wimmer
 LeRoy & Mary Jo Winkel
 Tammy Wood
 Brian & Cindy Youso

Endowment Fund

Since 1937 the historic Backus building has been a community gathering place, first as a school and since 2002 as a Community Center. For over 84 years Backus has played a vital role in the lives of thousands who live in and visit the area. Now an effort is underway to ensure the same holds true for generations to come.

- Q: What is the Backus Community Center Endowment Fund?
 A: This endowment fund is an investment portfolio with initial money provided by donations to the organization. Money is not used to pay utilities or employee wages, rather it ensures the sustainability of Backus Community Center for generations to come.
- Q: What are the benefits of the endowment fund?
 A: Endowment funds attract donors, especially generous donors. These donors understand Backus Community Center will manage resources well, plan efficiently, and will likely survive crisis.
- Q: When was the Backus Endowment Fund created?
 A: In 2019, following a sizeable donation and pledge by a local donor with a request that their dollars help generate more contributions. Backus Community Center formed a committee to outline plans and goals for the endowment fund's future. A goal of reaching \$1 million in five years was established.
- Q: What happens once that goal is met?
 A: Once the \$1 million goal is met, earnings may be expended to fund programs and projects that help fulfill the Backus mission such as:

- Outreach programs to address community needs and opportunities in International Falls and Koochiching County
- Ensuring the preservation and re-use of the historic Backus building continues in perpetuity
- Allowing flexibility in times of economic down-turns or major crisis

- Q: Can physical assets be donated to the endowment fund?
 A: Yes, however, they will be liquidated as outlined in the fund's by-laws.
- Q: What else will help grow the fund?
 R: A: The fund can accept gifts and bequests in wills, charitable trusts, gift annuities, assignments of life insurance, and transfer of property (cash, stock, bonds, real estate, etc.). We accept pledges for annual gifts across five years. Gifts may be dedicated in memory or honor of a family member or friend.

AARP Tax-Aide service has not been scheduled at Backus for 2022.
 AT THIS TIME, THE SERVICE IS CANCELLED
 If this changes, Backus will publish announcements.

You can access online tax prep at
https://www.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide

Thank you Jack & Mary Bartlett for coordinating this program in our community for many years!



KCC-TV Membership Form

Your membership contribution is tax deductible. NOTE: Backus is eligible for **Thrivent Choice Dollars**. If you would like to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Backus, please contact your Rep.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

<p>Individuals</p> <p>____ Student \$15</p> <p>____ Crew \$50</p> <p>____ Cameraman \$100</p>	<p>Businesses</p> <p>____ News Anchor \$150</p> <p>____ Director \$250</p> <p>____ Producer \$500</p> <p>____ \$ _____</p>	<p>Businesses supporting KCC-TV will receive an informational slide that runs on the Carousel Calendar in-between video programs.</p>
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Backus Community Center Membership Form

Your membership contribution is tax deductible. NOTE: Backus is eligible for **Thrivent Choice Dollars**. If

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Membership Categories

_____ Affiliate \$25 to \$59 _____ Sponsor \$150 to \$249 _____ Patron \$500 to \$999

_____ Associate \$60 to \$99 _____ Benefactor \$250 to \$499 _____ Presidential \$1,000 and up

_____ Supporter \$100 to \$149

Backus Community Center Donation Form

Your membership contribution is tax deductible. NOTE: Backus is eligible for **Thrivent Choice Dollars**. If you would like to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Backus, please contact your Rep.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Amount of your gift: \$ _____

This gift is a:

_____ Monthly Donation

_____ One-Time Donation

Does your donation honor someone special?

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

We would be happy to notify the family of or honoree of your gift. Please provide us with their complete name and address.

Please send your check payable to
Backus Community Center
 900 Fifth Street
 International Falls, MN 56649

You can also make your contribution on line. See the options available on our website at www.backusab.org/donations

Please call the Backus office if you have questions or need assistance. 218-285-7225



900 Fifth Street
 International Falls MN 56649
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 www.backusab.org

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BACKUS STAFF

Lois Lundin,
 Executive Director
Hoa Sobczynski,
 Business Manager
Alyssa Crawford,
 Office Assistant
Jerry Vohler, Custodian
Joe Kenny, Janitor
Rebecca Wright, Cook
Wanda Linder, Cook
Lenard Bobst, Cook
Cherie Sweney, Cook
Mary A. Lien, Event Staff
Jill Malone, Event Staff
June Wilson, Event Staff
Darcy Sullivan,
 KCC-TV Program Director

“Historic Backus Community Center, the heart of International Falls, where all generations celebrate arts, culture, recreation, wellness, and life-long learning.”



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Be sure you don't miss any of our mailings.
 Please send us your updated address, or just give us a call with any changes.
 ~ Thank you.
 (218) 285-7225

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