

MISSION STATEMENT:

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



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting
Wednesday, February 12, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Backus Community Center

BACKUS

Community Center



Ward Merrill, Executive Director
wardmerrill@backusab.org

Hoa Sobczynski, Business Manager
hoasobczynski@backusab.org

Robin Bjorkquist, Administrative Assistant
backusoffice@backusab.org

Jaime Sjoblom, Event Coordinator
Kathryn O'Connor, Event Coordinator

Jerry Vohler, Maintenance/Custodian
Joe Kenny, Janitor

Jill Malone, Event Supervisor

June Wilson, Event Supervisor

Mary Ann Lien, Kitchen Supervisor

Rick DeBenedet, Cook

Wanda Linder, Cook

Office Hours: 8 am to 4 pm

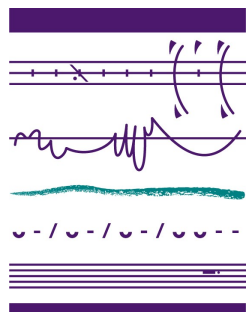
900 Fifth Street

International Falls MN 56649

Phone (218) 285-7225

Fax (218) 285-7118

www.backusab.org



MINNESOTA
STATE ARTS BOARD

A number of Backus projects have been supported through Minnesota's Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund

Activities made possible in part by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature from the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.



CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT

February 12, 2020

6:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. Introduction of Board Members and CBAB Members
3. Approve minutes from 2019 Annual Meeting (page 4-6)
4. Nomination and election of new Board Members (pages 7)
5. Review/discussion of Director/Treasurer/Committee reports:
 - a. Executive Director (pages 8-9)
 - b. Endowment Fund (page 9)
 - c. Finance/Treasurer (pages 10-16)
 - d. Building Use/Volunteer Numbers (pages 17-20)
 - e. Program & Events Summary (pages 18-19)
 - f. Operations Committee (pages 21)
 - g. Building & Grounds Committee (page 22)
 - h. Event Coordinator (page 23)
 - i. Arts, Programming, Fundraising (page 24)
 - j. Borealis Bards (page 25)
 - k. The Alexander Baker School—Adaptive Reuse Project (pages 26-27)
 - l. Ruby's Pantry (page 28-29)
 - m. Community Café (pages 30-31)
 - n. Summer Food Service Program (page 32)
 - o. Membership (pages 34-35)
 - p. Contributions & Donations (pages 36-39)
6. Motion to accept above reports
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Adjourn

Annual Meeting Minutes

Citizens For Backus/AB

Annual Meeting - February 13, 2019

Minutes

Present: Kay Arnold, Patti Ballan, Tim Fairchild, Derek Foss, Sherrie Lessard, Beth Lowthian, Tracy Lunser, Bob Marquardt, Dianne Maxey, Gail Rognerud

Absent: Julie Bartkowski, Harry Batdorf, Carol Bryant-Bushinger, John Faith, David Griffith

Emeritus: Barb Albert, Donna Fredericksen

Staff: Robin Bjorkquist, Ward Merrill, Hoa Sobczynski, Jaime Sjoblom

General members present: Les & Joanne Bjorkquist, Tom & Jane Barthell, Judy Peterson, Norma Kratz, Lynn Belanger, Byrne & Carole Johnson, Bob DeGross, Jeff Adams, Amy Mortenson, Marva Fairchild, Alan & Elaine Johnson, Violet Johnson, Karen Tveit, Michelle Schmidt, Jim & Linda Sutch, Sandy Dexter, Scott Gerlach, Gordy & Pat Ettestad, Doug Skrief, Joan Christianson, Lee & Carol Grim, Linda Merrill, Marlene & Scott Mixa, Debbie & Jim Peterson, Dan Burnell, Mel Mattson

Presentation of plaque by Gail Rognerud to Hoa for her 10 years of service and dedication to Backus as Business Manager. Thank you Hoa for your years of phenomenal service!

1. Call to order at 6:10 pm by Gail Rognerud, President.

2. Introduction of Board Members and CBAB Members

3. Approve minutes from 2018 Annual Meeting. Motion by Patti Ballan; 2nd by Bob Marquardt. Motion carried.

4. Nomination and election of new Board Members: The following nominees are presented for election to the Citizens for Backus/AB Board of Directors for a three year term: Incumbents: Patti Ballan, Julie Bartkowski, Bob Marquardt, Diane Maxey, Gail Rognerud. Motion by Sherrie Lessard to elect Directors as presented, 2nd by Dianne Maxey. Motion carried.

5. Review/discussion of Director/Treasurer/Committee reports:

a) Executive Director: Ward Merrill: Page 9 discusses the steps we have taken so far on the Alexander Baker project. In the years I have been here, this is the best plan we've had to bring Alexander Baker building back to life. This plan involves working in a partnership with Kootasca. AB was constructed in 1912, finished in 1914 and is still standing. The boiler system in the basement of that building is still being used today, and is expected to work for another 20 years. The Alexander Baker project began in 2017 when Backus and Kootasca passed a resolution to work on the development of the building. A county wide housing study was completed, after funding was raised in the community by stakeholders. The study was completed in December 2018 and offers specific recommendations to meet housing needs in the area. It recommends that the AB building project should be pursued and would help meet the housing needs in the area. The American Institute of Architects "Search for Shelter Design Carrette" at the University of MN provided a series of suggestions and potential plans for this project. A conditions assessment is being completed by Kass Wilson Architecture to photograph and document building features. Requests for proposals were sent to developers, with a deadline date in March 2019. We appreciate the consistent support of members, donors and sponsors because that is what has made all of this possible.

Annual Meeting Minutes (continued)

Question from members: Are you going to run a financial feasibility study? Ward: Once we find a good developer, they can help connect to funding. Other methods of funding are being explored. Historic tax credits can comprise a huge share of funding for projects like this, possible up to 40%.

Is there any sense of how the building has fared over the years of disuse? Ward: Assessments have found that the building is in good shape: the integrity has held up. There was water damage from when the roof was leaking, but that has been repaired and it appears there is no structural damage from the water. The roof is in good shape as it was replaced in 2008.

b) Finance/Treasurer: Patti Ballan: on page 10, there is a list of grants received in 2018. Ward, Hoa, Beth and others have worked superbly to bring in extra dollars to fund programming.

c) Building Use/Volunteer Numbers: The building is currently full, there is no open rental space at this moment.

d) Program & Events Summary: Report as submitted.

e) Operations Committee: Report as submitted.

f) Building & Grounds Committee: Report as submitted.

g) Arts & Programming, Fundraising: Diane Maxey: Please bring any ideas for fundraising if you have any thoughts or suggestions.

h) Event Coordinator: Robin Bjorkquist: Thank you for the opportunity to serve here and I look forward to many more years. Report as submitted.

i) Borealis Bards: Beth Lowthian: Due to continued community and member support that has led to program growth, the Bards developed a Program Committee in November 2018. We did 4 productions in 2018 and have 3 productions planned for 2019. Junior Bards will present their 3rd annual production on March 22-24, 2019. The 5th annual Room to Act will be Saturday April 27, 2019. Ward: Beth does a marvelous job writing grants to support the Bards.

j) Ruby's Pantry: Report as submitted. Volunteers are needed if you are looking for volunteer opportunities. Lee Grim: people and funding are needed to continue helping people through Ruby's Pantry.

k) Community Cafe: Report as submitted.

l) Summer Food Service Program: This program focuses on feeding children but also serves adults. Member input: more advertising is needed for this to communicate that all children in the community are welcome.

m) Rainy River Community College Food Pantry: Robin Bjorkquist: Thank you to Backus for being the fiscal agent for this project. One of the major stresses of college life is food insecurity. The Food Pantry is located on campus and consists of food obtained from Ruby's Pantry and purchased from Second Harvest and local grocery stores.

n) Membership: Membership is very important to Backus and we are grateful to all of our members. Membership contribution in 2018 was increased by \$6,000 from 2017.

o) Contributions & Donations: Report as submitted.

Motion to accept all reports as submitted.

Annual Meeting Minutes (continued)

6. **Old Business:** None presented.

7. **New Business:** Reminder about the Tet Vietnamese dinner on 2/23/19, this event has been planned since December and will be prepared by Hoa and her family and show a traditional Vietnamese fashion show.

8. Adjourn: 6:55 pm by President Gail Rognerud.

Door prizes:

Two Tickets to Sam Miltich: Jeff Adams

Two Performing Arts Season Tickets 2019-2020: Les Bjorkquist

One TET Dinner Ticket: Alan Johnson

Sjoblom Landscape & Nursery plant and gift certificate: Lee Grim

Backus T-shirt: Michelle Schmidt

Submitted by Tracy Lunser

2019 Backus Community Center

Backus enjoyed many things in 2019 including top left; a dining room full of volunteers enjoying a “thank you for volunteering!” lunch, top right; our kitchen staff and volunteers with the Backus’



garden fresh produce, bottom left; enthusiastic, costumed vendors at the annual Treat Street event for Halloween,



and bottom right; community stakeholders who meet



monthly at the Housing Collaborative meeting to discuss the housing shortage facing our community and seek solutions to resolve the issue



Nominating Committee

2019 Board of Directors

Term Expires

Barb Albert and Donna Frederickson (Emeritus)	
Kay Arnold	2020
Patti Ballan	2022
Harry Batdorf	2021
Julie Bartkowski	2022
Carol Bryant-Bushinger (Resigned June 2019)	2020
Tim Fairchild	2021
John Faith	2021
Derek Foss	2021
David Griffith	2020
Sherrie Lessard	2020
Beth Lowthian (Resigned Nov. 2019)	2020
Tracy Lunser	2021
Bob Marquardt	2022
Diane Maxey	2022
Gail Rognerud	2022

Citizens For Backus/AB Officers 2019

President: **Gail Rognerud**
Vice President: **Tim Fairchild**
Secretary: **Julie Bartkowski**
Treasurer: **Patti Ballan**

Board of Directors The following nominees are presented for election to the Citizens For Backus/AB Board of Directors for a three-year term

Kay Arnold	(Term: 2020 - 2023)	Incumbent	
Sherrie Lessard	(Term: 2020 - 2023)	Incumbent	
Nomination from the floor	(Term: 2020 - 2023)	_____	_____

Bylaws

Citizens for Backus/AB Bylaws sections

Article IV, Section 4.1 **Board Role, Size and Compensation:**

The Board is responsible for overall policy and direction of Citizens for Backus/AB, Inc. The Board shall have up to 15 and not fewer than 11 members. No Director may receive compensation for his or her service as Director. However, nothing contained shall be construed to preclude any Director from serving the corporation in any other capacity, or receiving reasonable compensation therefore.

Article IV, Section 4.3 **Board Elections:**

Election of new directors or re-election of current directors to a second or third term will occur as the first item of business at the annual meeting of the corporation. Directors will be nominated by a majority vote of the current Board of Directors. Directors may also be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting.

Article IV, Section 4.5 **Terms:**

All Board members shall serve three-year term, and are eligible for re-election. The initial Board of the corporation will have staggering numbers of terms to prevent an entire turnover of the board at one time.

Executive Director's Report

Writing an “end of the year” report conjures up some mixed feelings prompting me to reflect on all the things that occurred in 2019; grants awarded; great performances; community events; sad events and the passing of time. Twelve years have passed since I became director in February 2008 with those years passing all too quickly. In that time Backus has come a long way. From an organization functioning on a “survival” basis to one on a stable financial footing; experiencing wide community support; staffed by passionate dedicated employees; directed by an engaged and experienced board, and supported by hundreds of members, donors and volunteers. Our success is due to all those factors and individuals – many of whom are here this evening.

Highlights of 2019 included:

- A successful Performing Arts Series organized by our Arts & Programming Committee with one performance by comic juggler, Tuey Wilson, literally “setting the stage on fire”
- An amazing Vietnamese “Tet Dinner” organized by Hoa Sobczynski’s talented family
- A grant award of \$184,130 from the Otto Bremer Trust for general operating support, county-wide 4-H and pre-development costs for the AB Affordable Housing Project
- Gavin Wilson’s Eagle Scout “Court of Honor” recognizing his Scouting accomplishments and his well done Auditorium door refinishing project
- Darcie Schulz’s May Dance Recitals that filled the Auditorium to “overflowing” capacity with audiences of 981, 895 and 1,089 attending
- U.S.D.A’s grant award of \$32,100 funding 55% of almost \$60,000 of Backus improvement projects
- In June a pledge of \$100,000 from a local family, over three years to start an Endowment Fund which has already grown to over \$34,000 with a goal of \$1 million
- The wedding reception for Tyler & Grace Borgen in September was cause to celebrate not only a marriage but also Tyler’s long history of volunteer service to Backus
- On October 17 the Backus Kitchen served its 100,000th free meal during our Community Café. The total included meals from our Summer Food Service Program which began in 2010 and Community Café which started in December 2012
- Our Annual Halloween “Treat Street” drew a record attendance of 1,000 children and parents with 23 businesses and organizations participating.

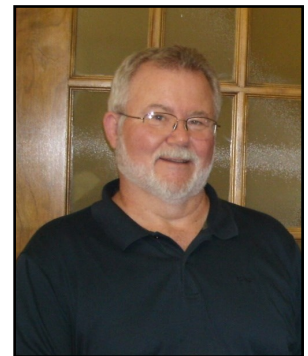


Executive Director's Report (continued)

- November witnessed the passing of a dear friend and Backus supporter Gordy Ettestad who was instrumental in founding Citizens for Backus/AB; “father” of the Endowment Fund; faithful attendee of Backus events and Annual Meeting, and with wife Pat, were generous financial supporters of Backus
- By December, after over two years of meetings, planning, research, studies, capacity building and hard work, the Backus and KOOTASCA Community Action Boards passed final resolutions to move forward with the adaptive reuse of the historic Alexander Baker School as affordable housing
- December concluded with, what we hope, will be a successful grant application to the Otto Bremer Trust for \$134,200 in operating support.

2020 will begin the 19th year of Citizens for Backus/AB. The year is filled with challenge, hope, excitement and anticipation as we work to fulfill our mission and to bring the AB School back to life as much needed housing in our community.

Ward Merrill, Executive Director



Backus Endowment Fund



Gordy Ettestad was an original Backus supporter and his financial knowledge was critical in the beginning of Citizens for Backus/AB.

In November 2008 Gordy Ettestad laid the foundation for an endowment fund for Backus. With three major capital improvement projects on our agenda (roof replacement, kitchen/dining room and third floor renovation), the Backus Fund lay inactive until 2019.

In June, Ivan and Marcia Stewart offered a generous gift of \$100,000 to Backus in hope their gift would generate additional funding. The gift will be received over a three year period beginning in 2019. Their initial contribution of \$33,333.33 forms the basis for the Backus Endowment Fund. On December 12, 2019 the Backus Board of Directors approved a resolution revising the fund and establishing it as a new article of the By-laws. The Board has set an initial goal of reaching \$1 million within five years.

The Fund is “established to provide effective and responsible stewardship of special gifts and to ensure the expansion of community work in International Falls and the surrounding area.” 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.).”

In honor of Gordy Ettestad's belief in the Fund, Pat Ettestad donated \$1,030 in memorial gifts to the fund which now totals \$34,363.33. We welcome your participation in this effort to ensure the continuation and expansion of the work of our Backus Community Center.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2019

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash	\$ 242,109
Accounts Receivable	5,853
Deferred Income	16,053
Petty Cash	50
Prepaid Bills	920
Inventory	1,557
Endowment Fund	34,348
Other Current Assets	<u>5,280</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 306,171

Property and Equipment (at Cost)

Buildings	\$ 835,684
Furniture and Fixtures	67,168
Kitchen Equipment	200,772
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(350,092)</u>
Total Property and Equipment (at Depreciation Cost)	\$ 753,532

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 1,059,703

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 7,336
Credit Cards	367
Grant/Restricted Funds	124,391
Other Current Liabilities	56,016
Long Term Liabilities	<u>441,156</u>
Total Liabilities	\$ 629,266

Equity

Retained Earnings	\$ 339,604
Net Income	<u>90,832</u>
Total Equity	\$ 430,436

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY \$ 1,059,703

Statement of Activities

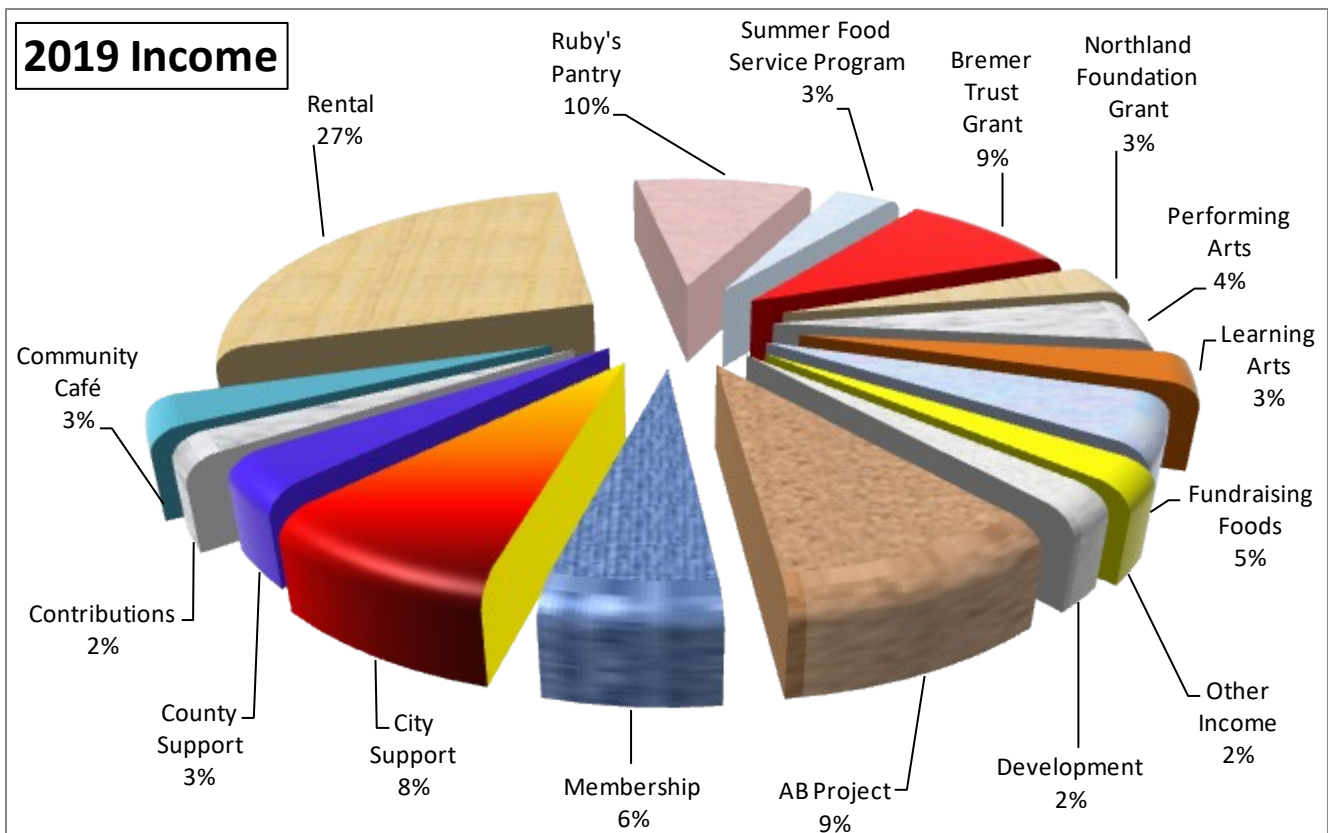
	2019	2019	2018	2017	2016
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Income:					
Performing Arts Income	\$ 31,500	\$ 28,065	\$ 36,965	\$ 58,880	\$ 37,666
Learning Arts Income	28,200	20,286	54,908	15,889	12,329
Fundraising Income	21,250	17,596	24,262	16,973	26,888
Administrative Income	5,660	2,868	7,832	3,437	11,337
Development Income	15,000	14,144	13,320	-	10,000
AB Project Income	54,130	62,610	-	-	-
Membership	35,000	38,014	39,325	33,400	37,935
City Support	55,000	55,000	50,000	60,000	60,000
County Support	21,000	21,300	21,000	17,000	16,000
Contributions	9,500	13,447	23,338	16,407	5,992
Miscellaneous Income	3,650	5,972	5,108	6,061	5,717
Community Café	18,800	19,616	19,068	20,000	22,939
Activity Income	7,040	6,191	6,829	11,666	6,562
Rental Income	174,300	179,616	167,752	156,463	150,733
Food Service Income	13,500	14,274	14,278	16,003	16,854
Ruby's Pantry Income	74,000	66,268	68,270	69,162	86,275
Summer Food Service Program	24,500	22,059	23,502	20,970	21,823
Bremer Trust - Gen. Op.	85,798	61,097	84,698	58,048	66,853
Other Grants - Gen. Op.		20,000	-	15,000	-
Total Income	\$ 677,828	\$ 668,422	\$ 660,456	\$ 595,359	\$ 595,903

Statement of Activities

-	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2018 Actual	2017 Actual	2016 Actual
Expense:					
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,418	\$ 4,503	\$ 3,716	\$ 5,356
Custodial Supplies	4,500	3,679	4,266	5,252	5,064
Dues/Fees/Subscriptions	1,500	925	1,022	1,990	2,139
Real Estate Tax	1,425	1,198	1,144	1,362	1,414
Advertising Expense	1,350	1,158	1,494	2,028	2,058
Interest Expense-loans	21,245	21,552	23,475	24,135	25,173
Insurance	21,672	20,898	20,266	19,233	19,835
Office Supplies/Maint.	4,264	3,454	1,966	3,301	3,207
Other Expense	3,550	1,798	1,544	2,238	2,121
Postage	2,725	1,825	2,346	2,428	2,326
Printing & Copies	6,000	6,369	6,337	5,529	4,684
Repairs & Maintenance	16,000	20,386	14,193	20,912	24,698
Salaries/Wages/Benefits	193,769	156,130	168,153	172,189	164,733
Utilities	64,000	69,987	67,496	55,166	53,511
Performing Arts Expense	29,850	18,738	31,692	64,852	42,252
Learning Arts Expense	30,900	18,911	54,634	19,268	16,904
Fundraising Expense	6,250	6,689	7,459	5,135	14,757
Administrative Expense	4,817	1,919	4,590	3,442	11,167
Development Expense	23,645	10,183	15,715	2,706	11,680
AB Project	54,130	54,236			
Membership Expense	1,000	1,290	719	611	901
Community Café Expense	28,884	27,214	25,798	24,473	25,993
Activity Expense	3,040	2,788	2,259	7,199	12,994
Rental Expense	9,600	6,827	9,352	4,842	1,235
Food Service Expense	11,186	13,230	12,230	12,921	11,412
Ruby's Pantry Expense	74,000	63,793	70,309	69,233	85,806
Summer Food Service Program	26,275	26,371	24,264	22,425	27,271
Total Expenses	\$ 650,377	\$ 565,964	\$ 577,225	\$ 556,586	\$ 578,692
Sub Net/(Loss)	\$ 27,451	\$ 102,459	\$ 83,231	\$ 38,773	\$ 17,212
Depreciation Expense		49,250	44,000	44,000	41,000
Loans - Principal Payments	27,451	29,664	33,229	23,523	23,865
Total Net / (Loss)	\$ -	\$ 23,545	\$ 6,002	\$ (28,750)	\$ (47,653)

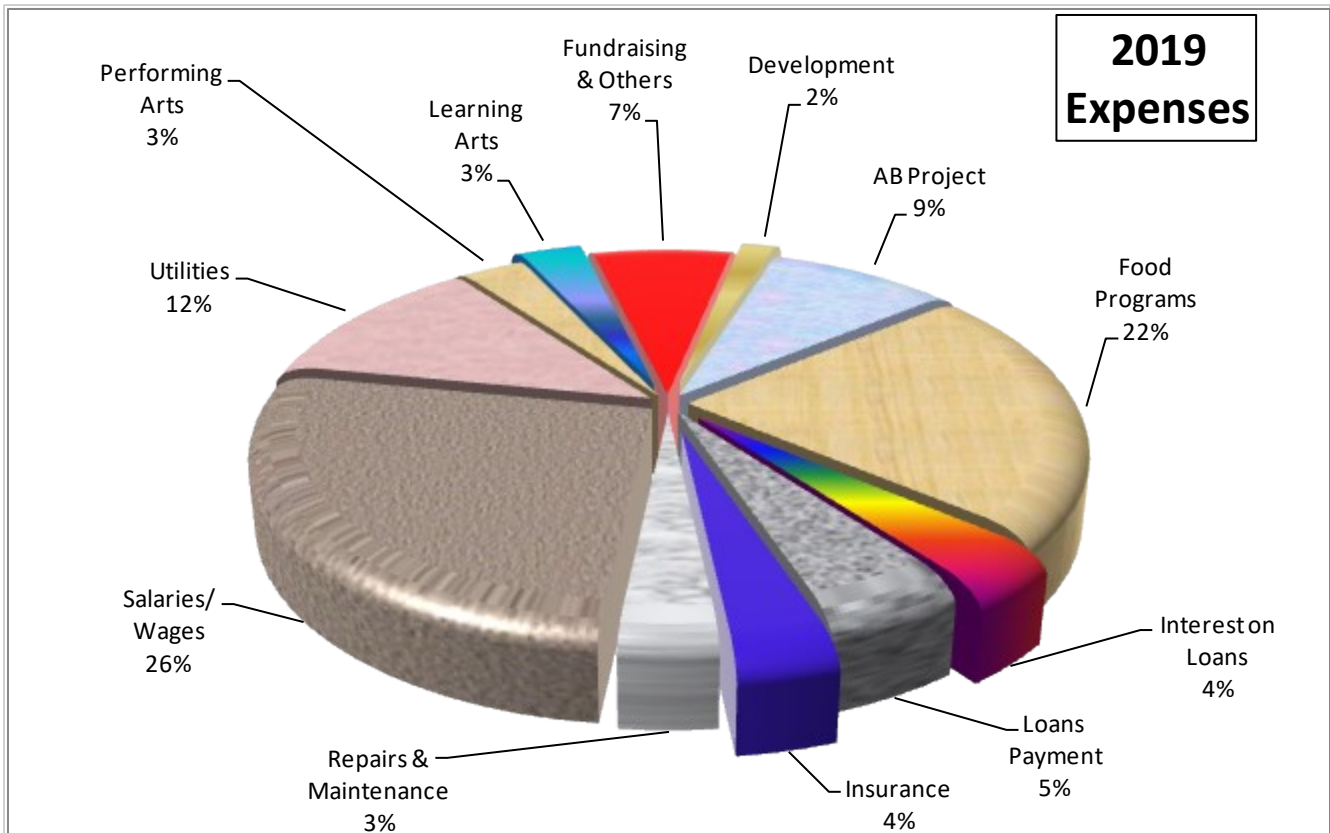
General Operating Income

Income:	2019 Actual	% Compared to Total
Performing Arts	\$ 28,065	4%
Learning Arts	20,286	3%
Fundraising/Foods Income	31,870	5%
Other Income	15,031	2%
Development Income	14,144	2%
AB Project Income	62,610	9%
Membership	38,014	6%
City Support	55,000	8%
County Support	21,300	3%
Contributions	13,447	2%
Community Café	19,616	3%
Rental	179,616	27%
Ruby's Pantry	66,268	10%
Summer Food Service Program	22,059	3%
Otto Bremer Trust Grant	61,097	9%
Northland Foundation Grant	20,000	3%
Total Income	\$ 668,422	



General Operating Expense

Expense:	2019 Actual	% Compared to Total
Interest on Loans	\$ 21,552	4%
Loan Payments	29,664	5%
Insurance	20,898	4%
Repairs & Maintenance	20,386	3%
Salaries/Wages/Benefits	156,130	26%
Utilities	69,987	12%
Performing Arts Expense	18,738	3%
Learning Arts Expense	18,911	3%
Fundraising & Other Expense	41,548	7%
Development Expense	10,183	2%
AB Project Expense	54,236	9%
Food Programs	130,608	22%
Total Expenses	\$ 592,840	



Net Income of Performances / Arts / Events

Performing & Learning Arts	2019 Net	2018 Net	2017 Net	2016 Net	2015 Net
Performing Arts	\$10,418	\$ 5,288	\$ (3,678)	\$ 3,069	\$ 1,479
Learning Arts	1,375	274	6,477	1,614	1,331
Performing & Learning Arts - Net (Loss)	\$11,793	\$ 5,562	\$ 2,799	\$ 4,683	\$ 2,810

Fundraising	2019 Net	2018 Net	2017 Net	2016 Net
Cash Bar	\$ 1,683	\$ 2,778	\$ 1,576	\$ 2,115
Egg Rolls	1,443	2,038	1,810	1,462
Concession	(178)	340	469	458
Pop Machines	928	1,917	1,271	1,339
Harvest Dinner	185	735	458	-
Tet Dinner	3,136	3,711	-	-
Other Fundraisers	(708)	640	3,101	1,402
Fundraising - Net (Loss)	\$ 6,489	\$ 12,159	\$ 8,685	\$ 6,776



Hoa Sobczynski and family planned, organized and managed the 2019 annual TET Vietnamese New Year dinner

Backus Building Use by the Numbers

Additional Backus Community Center Uses:

- ARDC New to Medicare presentation
- CBP Explorer Post Graduation Ceremony
- CWAC board meetings
- Gavin Wilson Eagle Scout Court of Honor
- Stroke Detection Plus
- Private parties & memorials
- Tuesday Musicale meetings
- Volunteer Attorney Program
- Youth Aftercare meeting
- Youth Aftercare brainstorming meeting
- Junior High Bronco Basketball teams used the gym for practice over **164 hours** in 2019.

While we make every effort to account for all the attendance, activity, hours of usage, volunteer hours, it is nearly impossible to account for every single minute and person who enters our building. Backus is used for a wide variety of meetings, events and gatherings, and by people of all ages, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. We truly are **YOUR** Backus Community Center.



Backus Building Tenants—2019 calendar year

(Clients, students, youth, members, etc. as reported by each tenant that come through their office on an annual basis)

The Dungeon – Basement	4,050
Icebox Radio Theatre – Basement B-6	200
Boy Scouts – Dining Room	280
Thrivent Financial—Room 101A	70
United Steel Workers Local 159 – Room 104	100
Dancin’ With Darcie - Room 112 (weekly)	520 students & guests
Northland Art Society – Room 114	968
ARDC – Area Agency on Aging – Room 201	1,781
U of M Extension/4-H – Rooms 203, 204 & 205	69 kids 1,588 hours
AARP Volunteer Tax Service – Room 203	1,026
Borealis Bards – Room 209	4,000
ISD 361 – Alternative Education Program – Room 210	90
MN Department of Public Safety – Room 211	950
Servants of Shelter – Room 212	2,246
Rainy River Recovery – Suite 301	5,060
Replenish Yoga – Room 303	820 half year
Koochiching County Community TV – Room 209	90
<u>Northland Counseling – Suite 305</u>	<u>1,978</u>
Total Tenant Usage in 2019	24,298

Backus Event Attendance

1/4/2019	AB Core Committee meeting & lunch	9
1/17/2019	Housing Study Presentation	60
1/19/2019	Icebox Days Chili Feed	71
1/28/2019	Koochiching County Housing Collaborative Meeting	20
2/1/2019	Costume Design Workshop	10
2/1/2019	BPAS: Tuey Comic Juggler	477
2/13/2019	Backus Annual Meeting	48
2/16/2019	Lighting Design for Theatre Workshop	7
2/18/2019	Contractor Continuing Education Class	21
2/23/2019	TET Vietnamese New Year Dinner	145
3/22/2019	Junior Bards One Acts, Episode 2	85
3/23/2019	Junior Bards One Acts, Episode 2	60
3/24/2019	Junior Bards One Acts, Episode 2	64
4/13/2019	BPAS: Sam Miltich, Jazz Musician	76
4/18/2019	Backus Volunteer Luncheon	63
4/27/2019	Bards Room to Act	58
6/21/2019	Summer Art Week	67
9/27/2019	BPAS: Woodstock Tribute Show	221
9/29/2019	Harvest Dinner	245
10/25/2019	BPAS: Borealis Bards The Little Prince	112
10/26/2019	BPAS: Borealis Bards The Little Prince	130
10/27/2019	BPAS: Borealis Bards The Little Prince	141
10/28/2019	Koochiching County Housing Collaborative Meeting	8
10/31/2019	Treat Street (450 kids + parents/adults)	1000
11/4/2019	Triple Espresso Actor Workshop	14
11/5/2019	BPAS: Triple Espresso - a highly caffeinated comedy	264
11/12/2019	Medical Q & A with Jeff Temple, Bigfork Valley Hospital	1
11/12/2019	Medical Q & A with Jeff Temple, Bigfork Valley Hospital	2
11/20/2019	AB Project Dinner	<u>17</u>
	Total Backus Event Attendance	3,496

Total Rental Event Attendance from page 19

6,895

Rental Event Attendance

1/15/2019	ASPEN of MN-ND Class	9
1/19/2019	Icebox Days Runner's Reception	107
1/27/2019	Arrowhead 135 Ultra Marathon Meeting & Dinner	116
2/2/2019	Northland Foundation Child Care Training	11
2/13/2019	All School Music Festival	500
2/21/2019	All School Choral Festival	150
2/23/2019	Johnson Memorial Service	60
3/14/2019	Mental Health Crisis Response lunch & meeting	16
3/21/2019	ASPEN of MN-ND Class	9
4/4/2019	KAO REST training and lunch	9
4/5/2019	Minnesota Deer Hunters Banquet	222
4/10/2019	MN Connections Academy (2 days)	18
4/12/2019	MN Virtual Academy (2 days)	3
4/15/2019	AARP Tax Aid	1026
4/16/2019	MN Energy Meeting & Dinner	29
4/18/2019	Thrivent Financial Open House	20
4/30/2019	Weight Loss & Stop Smoking Seminar	20
5/1/2019	Falls High School Band & Choir Concert	157
5/4/2019	Dancin' with Darcie Recital (3 shows)	2965
5/11/2019	Mother's Day Cake - The Journal	110
5/29/2019	ALICE Training	15
5/30/2019	ElderCircle RSVP Volunteer Coordinator Network meeting	20
6/6/2019	Mental Health Crisis Response lunch & meeting	20
7/13/2019	Jacksa birthday party	50
7/25/2019	Chamber Opportunity Zone Breakfast	10
8/3/2019	Allen baby shower	30
8/8/2019	Chamber EDC Meeting	12
8/8/2019	Community Health Board meeting & lunch	15
8/11/2019	Rail Road Safety Training	20
8/22/2019	Veterans Stand Down	150
9/7/2019	Borgen Wedding Reception	175
9/11/2019	Chamber Lunch & Learn	20
9/12/2019	Chamber EDC Meeting	12
10/10/2019	Chamber EDC Meeting	12
10/10/2019	Second Harvest Information Meeting	20
10/17/2019	Wilder Research (Minnesota Compass Workshop)	4
10/17/2019	Tuesday Musicale Meeting	10
10/17/2019	MN Logger Education Program - CPR/Safety class	17
10/17/2019	MN Logger Education Program - OSHA class	20
10/18/2019	Icebox Radio Theatre Halloween show	25
10/19/2019	Northland Foundation Child Care Training	6
10/24/2019	ElderCircle RSVP Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon	80
12/3/2019	Rainy Lake Medical Center training session	27
12/4/2019	Rainy Lake Medical Center training session with lunch	27
12/5/2019	Mental Health Crisis Response lunch & meeting	20
12/10/2019	St Thomas School Christmas Program	225
12/12/2019	Chamber EDC Meeting	13
12/15/2019	FHS Band & Choir Winter Concert	275
12/17/2019	Tuesday Musicale Meeting	8

Backus Building Use by the Numbers

Building tenants = **24,298**
 Backus event attendance = **3,496**
 Building rental = **6,895**
 Ruby's Pantry guests = **3,349**
 Community Café guests = **4,098**
 Summer Food Service diners = **5,507**
 Exercise Class = **887**
 Open Gym = **1,997**
 Walkers = **850** walked in the building
 Basketball Players = **50** used the gym
 Basketball Games = **540** attended games
 Volleyball Players = **173** participants
 (52,016 building users in 2018)

2019
Backus Community
Center Building Users
52,140

DISCLAIMER: We make every effort to account for all attendance in the building. The above number includes head counts AND estimates. The number does not represent individual people, but the number of times people enter the building for any reason.

	Number of Volunteers	Number of Volunteer Hours
Ruby's Pantry	1,009	3,284 hours
Community Café	725	1,159 hours
Office Volunteers	15	1,298 hours
Summer Food Service	17	556 hours
Building & Grounds	22	925 hours
General Volunteering	100	1,019 hours
Borealis Bards	65	3,553 hours

2019 Total volunteers: **1,953**

2019 Total volunteer hours: **11,794**

Volunteer hourly pay rate:

\$25.43/hour

(from independentsector.org 2019)

We sincerely thank all of our hard-working volunteers for all you do for Backus Community Center!



Stage Curtain improvements—This project has some final items to complete. Most of the improvements have been completed.

Signage update—New Bathroom signage and mounting brackets are installed. Thank you Dan Benedix for his help with this project.

Art Gallery Lighting—Kantor proposal for Art Gallery lighting- price quote for track lighting and installation is an amount of \$8,276.00. Ward & Patti will look into available grants that would be appropriate for funding.

Gym Floor Refinish—A group of volunteers contributed hours of labor during the Christmas break to clean and resurface the gym floor once again.

Room 101—Work was completed by Jed Becker to create two new rental offices, one which is rented to Thrivent Financial, the other available to rent.

Backus Property ID—On going project to ID and value all items.

LED lighting in Basement—Received USDA grant funds to replace basement lighting. Kantor to install.

KCC-TV—Backus and KCC-TV have merged. KCC-TV is now a Backus program and Darcy Sullivan is the main employee for KCC-TV.

Trimble GPS Antenna—Installed on roof of Backus. Sends GPS signals and Backus receives \$100/month rental fee.

USDA Grant—Grant provided 55% of project costs and Backus provided 45%. We will complete basement lighting replacement, remove and replace tile in East Hallway, Locker room drain repair, purchased new floor scrubbing machine, boiler condensate tank replacement, replace fuel lines to Boiler. Completion of jobs is required by July 2020.

Adaptive Reuse of AB as Affordable Housing Project—Backus and Kootasca have partnered for the housing project of AB. Three Rivers Community Action, represented by Chris Flood has served as our consultant. Conditions Assessment has been completed & we have final copy.

Endowment Legacy Fund—Started an Endowment Fund with funds received as a donation and memorial funds. Brochures will be available soon. Endowment Committee has been formed. Revisions were made to the 2008 draft originally prepared by Gordy Ettestad.

Succession Planning—Committee will start forming a plan for future Executive Director replacement. Preparations, review of job description, contact resources for search process.



Submitted By: Patti Ballan

Building and Grounds Committee

The boilers have been attended to two times a day. Number one takes over every morning and number two takes over every evening. The evening shift is set so that if there is a failure of one boiler the other will take over until morning. During these two daily inspections all of the special air compressors, air lines, condensate tanks and lines are checked and both boilers are blown down with a top blow down in order to check the cut off floats.

The chemicals are checked weekly, usually Friday at 8 am. At this time all of the air compressors, air lines, condensate tanks and lines are also rechecked.

John bought a new door closer for the east door and Jerry put it in service.

The boiler class met on Monday evenings at 7:30 pm in The Dungeon from January until May.

John received permission from Hoa to replace the CFL bulbs on the stage as they were getting old and becoming dimmer. He bought 140 LED dimmable bulbs for use on the stage and they were put in by two volunteers from Darcie's Dance Studio; Mark Gierszewski and his helper. They are a big improvement over the CFLs as they are brighter and they can be dimmed and they were at a reasonable price.

The boilers were taken apart as was the refractory. All was inspected by our crew and was repaired as needed. The boiler inspector passed both boilers and air compressor

Twenty five valves were installed last summer and were put in operation last fall

The boilers were up, running and put on line on September 23rd. It took several days to get the new valves to operate without any leaks. They have been operating flawlessly since then. Here's what the group has done to get the boiler up and running:

- A. Cleaned and refurbished most of the radiator steam top pneumatic valves in Backus.
- B. Cleaned, tested and replaced all of the thermostatic steam traps in Backus.
- C. Cleaned and refurbished most of the bucket steam traps in Backus.
- D. Replaced and are still testing a new thermostat in the dining room.
- E. The entire boiler system is functioning well.
- F. All of the newly installed valves have been tested under maximum pressure, adjusted and are working at this time.
- G. Took down weighted steam unit in fan room and plugged open holes

We sanded, scrubbed and refinished the gym over the Holidays. Jerry sanded and scrubbed the floors on the 23rd and 24th. John Faith organized a second crew on December 26th as the products were mistakenly sent to the Senior High School and we had to track them down and go get them. The refinishing crew was: John, Ward, Jeremy Faith, Kaden and Kylan Bjorkquist, Mark Thorpe and Harry Batdorf. We then sealed off the gym from the general public until January 2nd.

A special thanks should go out to Harry Batdorf for spending 18 hours physically digging out all of the excess sand and clay from the hole in the boys locker room in preparation for a large storage tank that will be placed by Shannon's to help catch the overflow drainage water until it can be sent to the storm sewer.

Volunteers working this year on various projects were: Gary Loop, Wally Clement, Harry Batdorf, Jeremy Faith, Kaden Bjorkquist, Kylan Bjorkquist, Mark Thorpe and John Faith.

End of the Year 2019 report submitted by John Faith

Event Coordinator Report

Jaime Sjoblom worked as Event Coordinator from November 2018 to September 2019. Kathryn O'Connor worked as Event Coordinator from October 2019 to January 2020.

The Event Coordinator has been responsible for catering and rental services. They work with clients from start to finish on all types of events including baby showers, wedding receptions, private birthday parties, meetings, workshops, luncheons and all other usage of our building. They are responsible for preparing contracts for client rentals.

Event Coordinators recruit volunteers for the front office, Summer Food Service Program, Summer Arts, Community Café, cash bar and concessions, performances and all other events where volunteers are needed to work. They record volunteer hours for each event so at the end of the year data can be shared with Backus stockholders.

The Event Coordinator plans, stocks and manages both the cash bar and the concession stand that are operated during junior high basketball games, shows and performances. They electronically keep track of inventory for financial purposes and recordkeeping.

Backus Event Coordinators work each event, overseeing the event to ensure a positive experience for all—artists, guests and volunteers.

Respectfully submitted, Robin Bjorkquist, Administrative Assistant

KCC-TV: Koochiching County Community Television

In December 2019 the Backus Board of Directors voted to assume ownership and management of Koochiching County Community Television, KCC-TV.

In 2012 a local group formed KCC-TV, taking over the television feed that had been airing from Rainy River Community College.



Over the past seven years, KCC-TV purchased digital broadcasting equipment and upgraded camera equipment. Hiring staff allowed the station to better serve the community by consistently recording government meetings and local events.

Current Program Director, Darcy Sullivan, at left, has spent the past two years recording and programming what is seen on Midco cable channel 7.

Recent improvements include live streaming of Bronco sporting events.

Backus is excited to announce this acquisition as it allows Citizens for Backus/AB to be a more integral part of International Falls and the surrounding communities.

Arts, Programming, Fundraising, Bards Committee

The Arts & Programming Committee consisted of Co-Chairs Beth Lowthian, Diane Maxey, Tracy Lunser and committee members Kay Arnold, Julie Bartkowski, Carol Bryant-Bushinger, Ariana Daniel, Donna Frederickson, Georgia Growette, Sherrie Lessard, Joyce Rasmussen, Gail Rognerud.

Business discussed throughout the year included the following:

- An Arts Education Program featuring classes on costume design, lighting design for theatre, theatre makeup techniques, introduction to puppeteering, children's theatre camp during summer art week and an introduction to play writing by playwright Forrest Musselman was held in 2019.
- There was much discussion and concern throughout the year regarding the Borealis Bards availability to space to build scenes for future plays. Backus assured the Bards that accommodations would be made to be sure they have a scene shop for the fall 2019 production.
- The Backus Performing Arts Season kicked off Friday, August 30 with a performance by a group of artists who attended a week-long retreat at Mallard Island. Performers included Kevin Kling and Dan Chouinard as well as others.
- The TET Vietnamese New Year Dinner was another huge success with 145 guests.
- In March the City of International Falls held a town hall meeting to discuss the Park and Rec Department. The city council chambers were full of people to discuss the pros and cons of facilities and programs in town, focusing on sports, but including anything recreational. Julie Bartkowski reported back to Backus administration. Backus provides gym space for the junior high rec basketball program at no charge to anyone. There was much discussion about the need for community-wide calendar.
- Andrea Gohl and Georgia Growette worked all year to inventory and display art that is currently in Backus storage areas. Jerry and Jean Hilfer brought over a collection years ago, which was intended for display, then was to be returned to them. It has been an on-going process to catalog and discuss what should happen with all the art pieces in the building. Sale of Mary Graves art collection continued throughout the year.
- Ariana Daniel coordinated another successful Summer Art Week June 17 through 21 with 67 students participating in classes.
- Tracy Lunser and Beth Lowthian stepped down as co-chairs with Tracy remaining on the committee, Beth resigned from the Backus Board. Julie Bartkowski and Sherrie Lessard were removed due to other committee commitments, Carol Bryant-Bushinger resigned from the Backus Board and Joyce Rasmussen has been inactive. New members welcomed in November were Carol Bass, Carol Belanger, Lynnea Dahlgren, Anne Nordstrom and Dori Pullar.
- Ward would like to see decorative covers for the basketball hoops. Discussion continued throughout the year on how we could make the gym space look less institutional for major events.
- Fundraising events were discussed throughout the year, including the return of the Ethnic Food Festival, a formal dinner with art auction, donut-making machine at games and events (didn't work out well, not enough people purchased), as well as other various ideas.

Artists and performers are continually researched and discussed for future performance seasons.

Respectfully submitted, Robin Bjorkquist, Administrative Assistant

Borealis Bards finished its 6th year of creating performances in International Falls that bring together people in our community. We could not do the community-building work we do without the support of the Backus Community Center staff and resources.

In January we continued the tradition of weekly recreational script reading meetings for adults. This is a program we have done since our founding. It typically attracts 6 to 12 people a week to read scripts, long and short, simply for the enjoyment of hearing them read aloud.

The Junior Bards spent January through March preparing a night of two One Act plays. The cast and crew for these were all under age 18 except for the directors. This production involved over 35 children, and attracted an audience of over 600 attendees at the three performances.

In April, the adults in the Borealis Bards performed in our annual Room to Act production. This dinner theater experience involved more than 20 people to produce shows on three stages during the evening.

In Spring, we also committed to producing our Fall production. Doug Skrief and Doug Lowthian co-directed *The Little Prince*. Work began in early summer to design sets, costumes, special effects, and plan the overall tone of the show. One exciting aspect of this show was the casting of newcomer, 13-year-old Mitchell Erickson, as the Prince, opposite veteran actor, Tim Weaver, as the Aviator. The intergenerational interplay and mentorship that was evident throughout this production exemplified one of the main goals of the Borealis Bards. The show was presented in October with rave reviews from the attending audience. The Falls Journal also attended many rehearsals to document the making of the show.

This year also saw the presentation of several skill-building workshops. Local talent, Anne Holen and Rick Holen, presented separate workshops on stage make-up and costuming. Early fall brought playwright, Forrest Musselman, to Backus for a 2-day play writing workshop. Eleven people, both adults and youth, attended this workshop. All found it very helpful. Some mentioned that understanding how a play is written will help them become a better actor. Others used it as an opportunity to jump start their own writing practice, with aims of eventually producing a script. Discussion was held about one day having a performance based on all local original scripts. Once again, as the participants ranged in age from 15 to, well above 15 (!), the intergenerational aspect of the Bards was in full view.

The Borealis Bards spent the year building its organizational structure as well. While much work fell on one or two people, the Bards now operate a Program Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Backus Arts, Programming, Fundraising, Bards Committee. We have been meeting regularly and have made decisions regarding the 2020 productions.

March will see a Junior Bards production of *Pinocchio*, directed by David Griffith, who has been in many Bards productions. A decision was made to forego the annual Room to Act program as there was a downturn in the number of adult actors responding. However, a director and title was chosen for the Fall 2020 production which will be *Charlotte's Web*, directed by Keri Norton.

Submitted by Doug Lowthian

The Alexander Baker School

Recently two gentlemen stopped in the office and inquired about the AB Project or the “apartments” and “how they’re coming.” I had interesting conversations with both. They were amazed at how much work has been accomplished to date in spite of the fact of having no funding in hand and haven’t begun any construction.

A 2019 Study by the U of M Extension Service on “The Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings in Rural Minnesota” focused on 12 projects in rural Minnesota and why they were successful. The report also acknowledged that adaptive reuse projects are especially challenging in rural Minnesota. Barriers include: complicated funding structures, the lack of local expertise in historic preservation and planning processes that must address strict standards for adaptive reuse. The current effort for the reuse of the Alexander Baker School is our third attempt and one that we feel has the best chance for success. The process has been long, difficult, but highly rewarding. Our partnership with KOOTASCA Community Action and the MN Housing Partnership significantly increase our opportunity to succeed. Our milestones to success include:

2017:

- Partnering with KOOTASCA and MN Housing Partnership (MHP) to form the Koochiching County Housing Collaborative – monthly meetings of stakeholders to explore housing issues and seek solutions. The need for a current “Housing Study” becomes apparent.

2018:

- Stakeholders raise \$25,000 and with a \$10,000 grant from MHP commission a county-wide housing study.
- MHP provides further training and capacity building assistance
- Backus/KOOTASCA form an AB Core Team to plan development

2019:

- In January Community Partners Research presents the Housing Study to the public. The study reveals a dire need for all types of housing and endorses the AB Adaptive Reuse Project.

- Backus is awarded a \$54,130 Otto Bremer Trust grant for pre-development costs



Adaptive Reuse Project 2019

- The AB Project is selected to participate in an AIA “Search for Shelter Design Charrette at the University of MN.
- Kaas Wilson Architects begin work on a Condition Assessment of the AB School funded by a \$10,000 grant from the MN Historical Society and a \$5,000 grant from Henry & Virginia Sweatt
- Bi-weekly conference calls with MHP on AB Project (KOOTASCA/Backus)
- RFPs are sent to twenty prospective developers. Follow-up calls are made
- County stakeholders continue to meet
- A proposal is received from one developer
- Two developers conduct site visits to AB: Three Rivers Community Action and Commonwealth Development
- Three Rivers is contracted to provide consulting and training services.
- A “Feasibility Study” is completed concluding the project can be successful
- A “Market Demand Analysis” is completed indicated sufficient demand for AB housing
- Backus and KOOTASCA Boards give final approval to the AB Project
- KOOTASCA agrees to serve as “developer” of the project

2020:

- MN Historical Society approves the “Condition Assessment” by Kaas Wilson Architects
- Community Housing Development Corporation (CDHC) agrees to serve as “co-developer” with KOOTASCA
- Tentative agreement reached with Urban Works Architects to serve as project architect
- Tentative agreement with Hess Roise to serve as Historic Consultants
- Preparation of MN Housing Application for Low Income Housing Tax Credits begins
- June: Application to MN Housing (formerly MHFA) for Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- November: Notification by MH Housing of LIHTC project awards. (Comprises 70-80% of funding for the project. 20-30% from State/Federal Historic Tax Credits)

*Ward Merrill,
Executive Director*

Ruby's "Pop-Up" Pantry

If you get hungry or put food on the table – you qualify for Ruby's Pop-Up Pantry

The idea for Ruby's Pantry was first presented to the Community Café Steering Committee during the winter of 2015 by Mary DeNeffe who was driving clients 70 miles to Cook, MN to participate in their Ruby's Pantry. Mary passed away last August after a courageous battle with cancer. Without Mary's caring heart and her concern for others, Ruby's might never have come to International Falls. Her legacy of caring lives on each second Monday of the month when over 300 guests participate in our distribution of surplus food. We estimate that 1,000 to 1,200 family members benefit from Ruby's each month.

Our Ruby's Pantry began in July 2015 after a community organizing effort that brought together members of the faith community in our area. Virtually all of Ruby's 60+ sites in Minnesota and Wisconsin are sponsored by churches. The Falls is unique in having Backus as the sponsor and the site. The Backus Gym and Auditorium provide a unique site for this program that has served almost 10,000 guests since opening. Each month an average of 90 volunteers make this event happen for our guests who drive from as far as Baudette to participate. During 2019 a total of 1,009 people served as Ruby's volunteers devoting a total of 3,284 hours over the year.

A team of volunteer "coordinators" supervise each aspect of the project from promotion to truck unloading, parking and carry-out, finance, registration, volunteers and distribution line coordination. Guests are asked to contribute a \$20 cash donation and in return receive one "share" of food which usually overflows two totes or laundry baskets. Two dollars from each \$20 donation stays in our community and is donated to local charities and non-profits through an application process. From August 2015 to **December 2019, \$27,425** has been donated to community organizations by Ruby's Benevolence Committee.

Everyone is welcome to take part in Ruby's Pantry regardless of economic status. This program is for anyone who might be concerned about food waste. Studies show we waste about 40% of the food produced in North America each year. Ruby's believes *the best place to store surplus food is in people's stomachs*. ***If you're concerned about food waste – take part in Ruby's as a volunteer or as a guest.***

*Ward Merrill,
Site Coordinator, Ruby's Pantry*



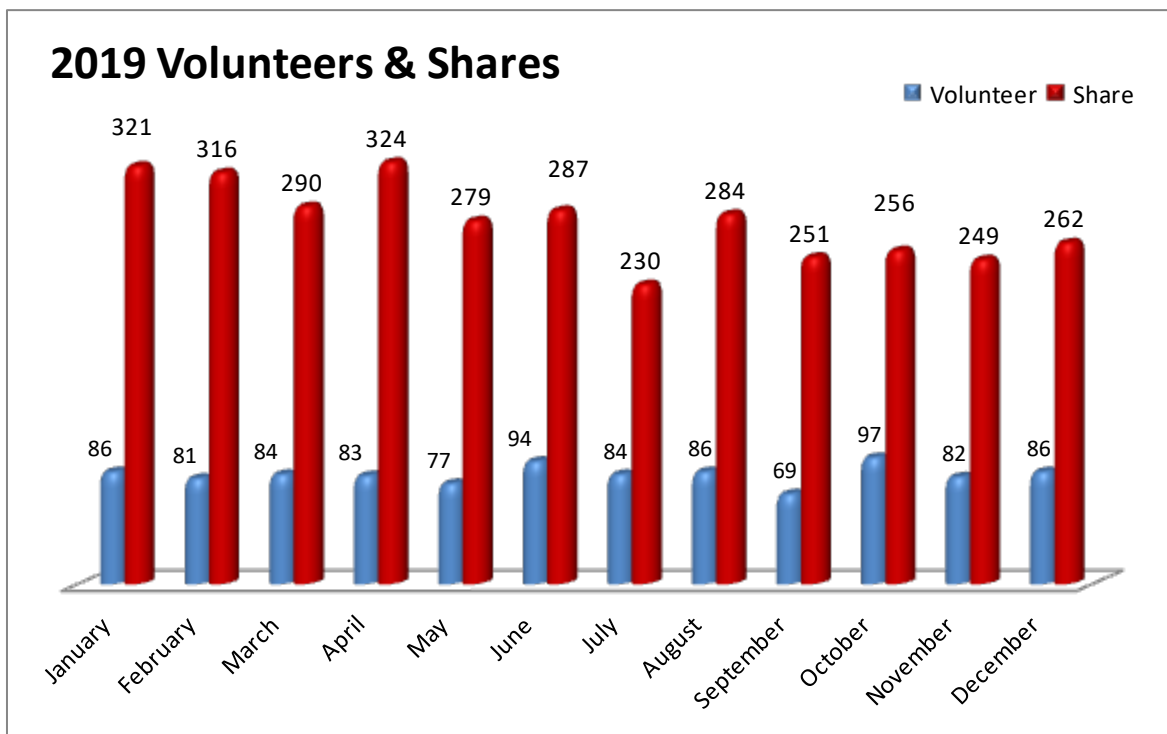
At left, Lois Lundin, Ruby's Pantry Lead Coordinator, with volunteers at the August 2019 distribution.

Ruby's Pantry welcomes new volunteers, visit www.rubyspantry.org for more information.

Ruby's Pantry (continued)

Month	Volunteer 2019	Share 2019	Volunteer 2018	Share 2018	Volunteer 2017	Share 2017	Volunteer 2016	Share 2016	Volunteer 2015	Share 2015
January	86	321	86	263	95	259	101	325		
February	81	316	85	295	88	258	115	360		
March	84	290	79	301	96	269	103	323		
April	83	324	77	330	99	288	115	360		
May	77	279	87	274	92	318	120	314		
June	94	287	97	281	97	324	99	317		
July	84	230	94	266	92	316	118	339	110	540
August	86	284	87	217	79	315	116	343	150	387
September	69	251	90	276	79	287	109	302	111	402
October	97	256	81	297	82	328	96	312	117	339
November	82	249	77	268	92	289	113	285	118	366
December	86	262	72	289	84	257	103	298	119	300
Total	1009	3349	1012	3357	1075	3508	1308	3878	725	2334

An average per month
279 shares distributed
84 volunteers



Community Café

Dedicated to reducing hunger & building a stronger community

2019 marked the seventh full year that the Café has been operating since Backus and the Falls Hunger Coalition began the Café in December 2012. Support for the Café's \$30,000 - \$35,000

annual budget comes from a variety of sources including: the Otto Bremer Trust, Northland Foundation, Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund, PCA/Boise, the Diocese of Duluth, the Koochiching County Board, area congregations and individual donors. The Falls Hunger Coalition has been a consistent and generous supporter.

Has the Café made a difference in your life or that of your family?
December 2019 Survey Question

"My Grandma and me come together and I've made friends."

"Eating and serving at the Café helps me connect with people in my community."

"Our family is staying in a hotel right now and it's so great to get out of our room for a nice, hot meal twice a week. We are so grateful. Thank you."

"Knowing that on a cold night with no money for food that this amazing community offers us a warm place and a warm meal truly warms the soul! Thank you and God bless you all!"

The largest volunteer support comes from four area congregations with First Lutheran, St. Thomas Catholic Parish, Zion Lutheran and Evangelical Covenant Church staffing four weeks each month. Other organizations providing volunteers include: Falls Hunger Coalition, Holy Trinity Episcopal, Falls Rotary Club, Kootasca and other social service providers. Each meal requires six volunteers with an average of 12 total hours worked each evening. **The Café could not operate without the support of our volunteers who contributed 1,159 hours in 2019!**

Although dinner at the Café is served from 5:30-6:00pm each Tuesday and Thursday, doors open at 5pm and guests begin to gather as early as 4:30pm. They may enjoy visiting with friends, meeting new ones or having a cup of coffee while they wait. Guest surveys indicate that people look forward to the socialization almost as much as the

food. Staff and volunteers welcome people, visit a bit while serving and treat each person with respect and politeness. Everyone is welcome regardless of economic or social status; there are no income guidelines and we don't expect a donation. **Each evening an average of 61 meals are served** and guests are welcome to return for second helpings. **One fourth of the meals go to children.**

A Café Steering Committee meets quarterly to oversee operations, budget, fundraising, promotion and discuss input from guest surveys. Members include: Pat Bjorum, Tammy Linder, Karina McLellan, Jenell Feller, Hoa Sobczynski and Ward Merrill.

The strong support from area congregations is exemplified by an early comment made by a member of First Lutheran who said, "If we can't come together on feeding people, what can we ever come together on?" The Café is certainly a great example of a community coming together to feed people. Thank you!

*Ward Merrill,
Executive Director*



In October 2019, Backus Community Center celebrated the 100,000th meal served from the kitchen!

Community Café (continued)

Year	Adult	Children	Total Meals Served
2012	83	49	132
2013	2842	865	3707
2014	4114	956	5070
2015	4158	1172	5330
2016	4076	1366	5442
2017	4271	1481	5752
2018	3936	1300	5236
2019	3089	1009	4098
Total	26,569	8,198	34,767

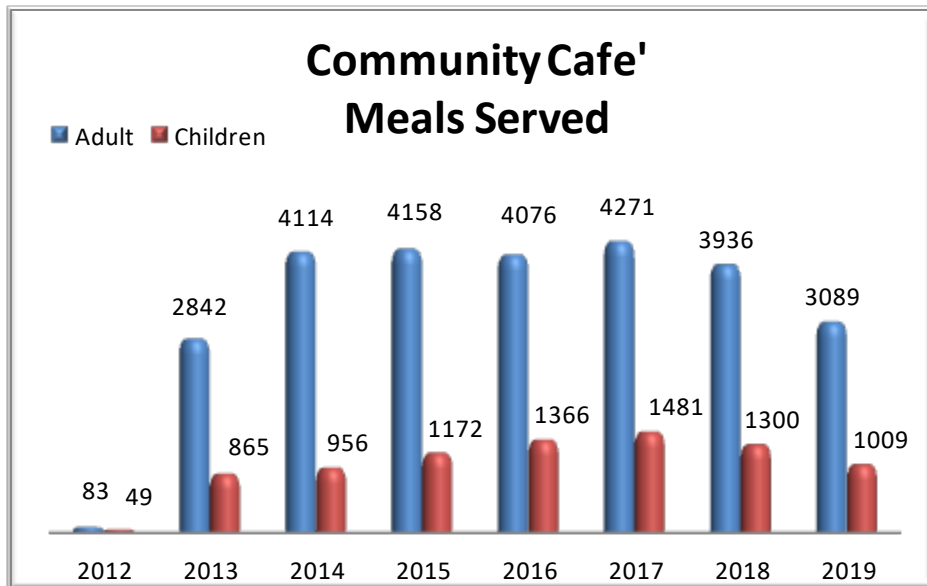
Over 34,000 meals have been served through Community Café from December 4, 2012 to December 31, 2019

Second served and take out meals are not included in this data.

This data represents only adults and children who dined at Backus Dining Room.

December 2012 to May 2013 -
Meals served only on Tuesdays

Beginning June 2013 -
Meals served on Tuesdays and Thursdays



Community Café
Volunteer Hours
in 2019: 1,159
by 725 volunteers

2019
Adult Diners: 3,089
Child Diners: 1,009
Total Diners: 4,098

2019 Community Café Volunteer Groups

- First Lutheran Church, 1st week
- Knights of Columbus, 2nd week
- St Thomas Church, 2nd week
- Zion Lutheran Church, 3rd week
- Evangelical Covenant Church, 4th Tuesday
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
- Rotary Club
- Int'l Falls Social Service Providers
- Kootasca
- I Falls Nice
- Falls Hunger Coalition
- Borderland Young Professionals
- Fairview Home Care & Hospice
- Falls Good Samaritan Society
- RRCC Men's Basketball Team

Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) begun in 2010 provides a free “school” type lunch to children ages 1-18. The program is sponsored, certified and inspected by the MN Department of Education (MDE) and has specific guidelines for nutrition, portions and components of meals. To date the program has served 59,343 meals. A two-hour supervised “open gym” during the lunch period provides physical activities.

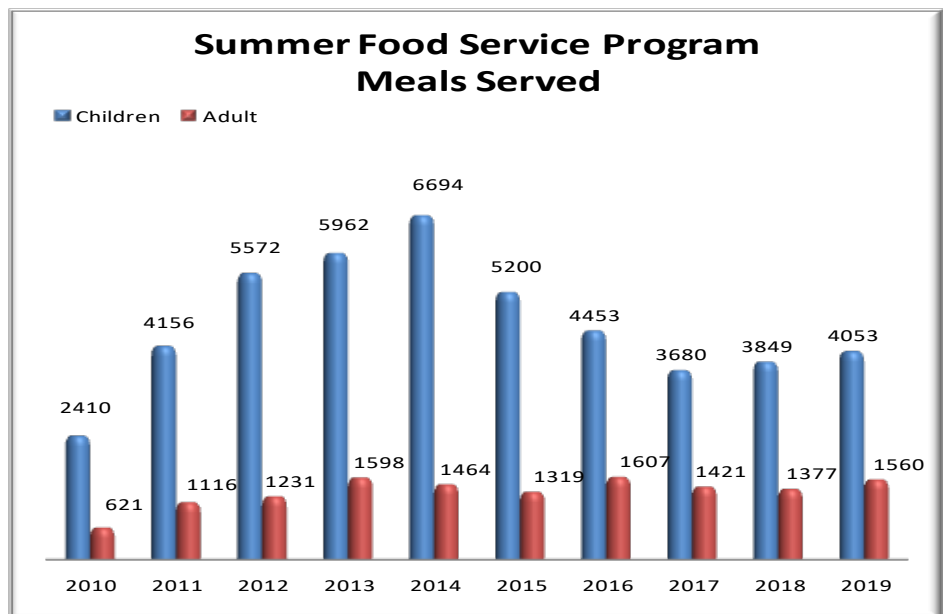
The program completed its 10th year in 2019. A free, nutritious meal was served Monday-Friday, 11:30am – 1:30pm from June 3 to August 30. A supervised “open gym” was offered during the lunch time. Parents were encouraged to eat with their children and donate \$4.00 if possible. Adult meals not paid for were reimbursed by the Falls Hunger Coalition (FHC) who also provided nutritional weekend “snack packs” to children each Friday. The population served included children age 1-18, their parents, grandparents, Servants of Shelter, and FHC clients.

Year	Children	Adult	Total Meals Served
2010	2410	621	3031
2011	4156	1116	5272
2012	5572	1231	6803
2013	5962	1598	7560
2014	6694	1464	8158
2015	5200	1319	6519
2016	4453	1607	6060
2017	3680	1421	5101
2018	3849	1377	5226
2019	4053	1560	5613
Total Meals Served			59343

Parent surveys in the Summer Food Service Program indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with the summer lunch program. Parent’s reasons for participating included: nutrition, food budgets, not enough money for food, socialization, large families and connecting with others. Several family members indicated they were unemployed. People “liked:” friendly staff, delicious food, variety, quick, kids being able to play with friends and balanced meals. Although the summer lunch program is successful according to participants and helping to meet needs for nutritional summer meals – our concern continues to be the decreasing number of participants each summer since reaching a high of 6,694 children’s summer meals in 2014.

The Summer Food Service Program served a total of 4053 meals to children while 1,560 were served to adults in 2019 bringing the number of summer lunches served to over 59,000

Ward Merrill,
Executive Director



2019 Building Projects

2019 included multiple construction projects at Backus. The opening in room 101/102 was closed to make office space accessible from the hallway. The previous corner office accessible only from 101/102 was given a new private door in the hallway. Room 101A is now rented full time by Thrivent Financial. Room 101B is available for rent.



Below, Jerry Vohler uses the newly purchased floor scrubbing machine to clean and maintain the terrazzo flooring in the Backus hallways.

Below right, Jerry sands the gym floor for resealing. Since Backus is such a multi-purpose facility, the floors take a beating. Regular maintenance is a must to keep the facility in tip-top working condition for the benefit of the community.



Left, a large hole was excavated in the boys locker room in 2019 as part of a drainage project to remove standing water as well as underground water flow.

Harry Batdorf volunteered 18+ hours working on this project.

The Operations Committee has worked diligently at resolving any foundational issues that have occurred after 83 years of building use.

2019 Membership

Affiliate – Under \$60

Barb Albert
Gary & Terri Anderson
Dorothy Blais
Bob & Barb Byman
Dorothy Carey
Charlene Erickson
Kathie Fluke
Bunny Green
Barbara Harrington

Peter & Greta Hemstad
Roger & Betty Jackson
Evan Johnson
Phil Johnson
Tom & Edna Karsnia
Joe & April Krause
Craig & Mary Moe
Wesley & Carolyn Peterson
Timothy Roche

Nancy Rognerud
Danny & Karen Salo
Dee Dee Thompson
Adam Tillis
Gerald Wherley
Steve & Jennifer Windels
LeRoy & Mary Jo Winkel
Michael & Allison Wulff

Associate - \$60 - \$99

Beth & Allan Anderson
Kenneth Anderson
Anderson Piano Service
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Ralph & Kathy Awe
Elaine Beach
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Tyler & Grace Borgen
Jerome Brekke
Joan Christensen
Milo & Margaret Christianson
Marguerite Davison
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Oral & Barbara Howland
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Duayne & Nancy Johnson
Einar & Julie Johnson
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Dennis & May Ann Kalar
Phyllis Karsnia
Florence Knutson
Ladd & Onida Kocinski
Norma Krats
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George & Carol Smith
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Rick Toninato
Kathy Weir Tornes
Linda Torseth
Bard & Terri Trickel
Lorne & Marlys Tveit
Donna Walls
Mary Wilson

Supporter - \$100 - \$149

American Family Insurance
Carol Anderson
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Dave Austin
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Jack & Mary Bartlett
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Jean I. Evens
Bill & Kitty Ewald
John & Lynda Faith
Donn & Susan Fuller
James & Vicki Giauque
Marty & Lindsey Goulet
Mary Graves
Lee & Carol Grim

Kirk Skallman & Georgia Growette
Jerry & Marsha Hauke
Joan Heinle
Jon Talsness & Betty J. Henrickson
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Trish & Mike Hogan
Mike & Ann Holden
Rick & Anne Holen
Tom & Phyllis Holm
Richard & Raynita Houglum
Dennis & Pamela Jenson
Mary Ann & Wayne Kasich
Jean E. & Charlie Kelly
Ingeborg Kofstad
Marvin & Barb Kruskopf
Marit Lee Kucera
Jessie Laurion
Arvid & Barb Leinum
Chuck & Nancy Lindahl

2019 Membership (continued)

Supporter - \$100 - \$149 (continued)

Raoul & Lynn Lufbery
Linda Makenin
Carol Mannausau
Larry & Alyce Mannausau
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Ethel E. Mattson
Diane Maxey
Donna McClellan
Rocky & Karina McLellan
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Brenda Sullivan
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Betty Villalta
Dennis Vohler
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Kalan & Kyrie Wagner
Daryl & Teresa Waller
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Malcolm Watson
Jim & Kathy West
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Jack & Karen Wilson
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Sponsor - \$150 - \$249

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Chadd & Kim Boyer
Bremer Bank
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Tim & Marva Fairchild
Dennis & Sharon Frank

Gordon & Jennifer Gelo
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Jim & Jill Malone
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Bob Marquardt
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Doug & Beth Lowthian
Sandy's Place LLC

Cathy & John Schroeder
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Stewart's Super One Foods
John Bruggeman & Sue Swendsen

Director's Circle - \$1,000

Duane Jacobson

Lynn Naeckel & David McKee

Marcia & Ivan Stewart

President - \$1,000+

Donna Frederickson

Ward & Linda Merrill

Kurt & Hoa Sobczynski

We apologize for misspelled names and any omissions. Please contact the Backus Office at (218) 285-7225 for corrections.

Contributions and Donations

2019 Contributions in Memory of:

Andy Anderson from Donna Frederickson

Bob Anderson from Ron & Janice McClanahan and Donna Frederickson

Darnell Walls-Andrews from Donna Frederickson

Dale Arnold from Kay Arnold

Pat Berryamn from John & Karen Wilson

Alma Bigler from Donna Frederickson

Jean Galusha Bragg from John & Karen Wilson

Corky Brindos from Donna Frederickson

Ralph Brown from Donna Frederickson, Ward & Linda Merrill, and Elaine Story

Gordon Ettetsad from Kay Arnold, Ann Backes, Tom & Jane Barthell, Dean & Elisabeth Christenson, Susan Congrave, Tim & Marva Fairchild, Donna Frederickson, Kirk Skallman & Georgia Growette, Ron & Lisa Hanson, Robert &, Jean Houska, Einar & Julie Johnson, Byrne & Carole Johnson, Eileen Kirk, Robert & Debra Kirk, Theresa Kjellgren, Deanna Koranda, Andrew & Carrie Luedtke, James & Lori Lyman, David & Lynn McKee, Ward & Linda Merrill, Anne Nordstrom, Ron & Wanda Pelland, Robert & Pam Peterson, Martin & Gretchen Plantenberg, John & Debra Polkinghorne, George Schlieff, Thomas Sexter, Zona Kinn and Mark & Gary Skallman, William & Helen Smerika, Kurt & Hoa Sobczynski, Ivan & Marcia Stewart, Andrew & Georgeann Wright

Tom Hardy from Donna Frederickson and Jean Houska

Lea E. Jackson from Doris Pullar

Irene Johnson from Ron & Janice McClanahan

Arlene Julien from Ward & Linda Merrill

June Kirvan from Donna Frederickson and Ward & Linda Merrill

May Kittelson from Ron & Janice McClanahan

Lil Koranda from Doris Pullar

Dixie Little from John & Karen Wilson

Peggy Little from John & Karen Wilson

Ethel Mann from John & Karen Wilson

Barb McDowell from Donna Frederickson and Ward & Linda Merrill

Audrey Nelson from Donna Frederickson and Ward & Linda Merrill

Audrey Niemi from Donna Frederickson

Deana Pavleck from John & Karen Wilson

Marvin Pearson from Stuart & Sue Nordquist

Ed Peterson from Ward & Linda Merrill

Harriet Rosenberg from Donna Frederickson, Linda Makinen, Mary Sabatke, and John & Karen Wilson

Jane Rosenthal from Mary Graves Budak and Jim & Sherrie Lessard

John Ruelle from Donna Frederickson

Emilee Schultz from Donna Frederickson and Ron & Janice McClanahan

Floyd Streiff from George & Carol Smith

Linda Tilander from John & Karen Wilson

Helen Vold from Donna Frederickson

Mary Carey from Milo & Margaret Christianson, and Donna Frederickson

Carol Cassibo from Ward & Linda Merrill

Joyce Christianson from John & Karen Wilson

Shirley DeMarchi from Ron & Janice McClanahan, Ward & Linda Merrill and Alton & Linda Shannon

Glen Desens from Jim & Sherrie Lessard

2019 Contributions to Community Café Received From:

- Diocese of Duluth - Rice Bowl
- Ecumenical Summer Church Services
- Donna Frederickson in Honor of John Frederickson
- Bruce & Margaret Kelly in Honor of Tom & Jane Barthell
- Marshall Knudson Family Community Fund
- Mike & Linda Orsted in Honor of Tom & Jane Barthell
- Rainy Lake Medical Center Employees
- Ann & Ricky Sigsby in Honor of Tom & Jane Barthell

Contributions and Donations (continued)

In-Kind Donations

- Anderson Piano Service—Tuned piano
- Ballan Furniture, Inc.—Materials to cover 3rd floor elevator entry
- Harry & Sally Batdorf—Piano bench to replace broken one dining room
- Knights of Columbus Council 1540—Chili for Chili Feed
- Al & Wanda Linder—One box soda crackers and one dozen eggs for Community Café
- Al & Wanda Linder—Kitchen supplies: two 3.5" paring knives and two turner cake servers
- Bob Marquardt—Had Backus laptop repaired
- Ward & Linda Merrill—Candy for Treat Street
- Ward & Linda Merrill—Beverages for AB Project dinners on 9/24/19 and 9/25/19
- Isaac Meyer—30 pounds of fresh carrots for Harvest Dinner
- Polkinghorne's Hardware—Pressure Cooker
- Sammy's Pizza—Two certificates for Community Café Survey
- Sjoblom's Landscape & Nursery—Tomato and vegetable plants for Backus garden
- Kurt & Hoa Sobczynski—200 pounds of fresh beets and 200 pounds of fresh rutabagas for Harvest Dinner
- Loni Bright, Top That by Loni—Labor to fix piano bench

2019-2020 Performing Arts Season Sponsors

- City of International Falls
 - Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund
 - Packaging Corporation of America
 - Stewart's Super One Foods
 - Family of Karen (Turnquist) Johnson
 - Days Inn
 - Bremer Bank
 - Border State Bank
 - Shannon's Plumbing & Heating
 - Northland Counseling Center
 - Coca-Cola Bottling Inc
 - Jim & Sherrie Lessard
 - Sandy's Place
 - Wagner Construction
 - Lucachick Architecture Inc
 - Rainy River Recovery
 - Thrivent Financial—Crossings Group
 - Ward & Linda Merrill
 - City Drug Store
 - Rainy Lake Medical Center
 - Kantor Electric
 - Boyer's Scrub-A-Rug
 - MN Monument & Granite Works
 - Borderland Insurance Agents
 - In Memory of Mary Jo Gerlach
 - In Memory of Robert Frederickson by Donna Frederickson
 - Mike & Cynthia Jakska
 - Wherley Motors
- We sincerely thank you for bringing this wonderful season to our stage!

Lifetime Seat Sponsorships

- E.L. & Gary Anderson—with Thanks to City Drug
- Kay Arnold— Sterling & Marie Houglum Memorial
- Millie Ballan—Dan Ballan Memorial
- Marilyn Berlin—Dr. James A. Berlin Memorial
- Corrine Brindos—Max Brindos Memorial and In Honor of Corrine “Corky” Brindos
- Alan & Miriam Burchell—Honor of Alan & Miriam Burchell
- Jan Dunlap—Virginia Keyes Pavek Memorial
- Joan Evanoff—Sam Memorial and In Honor of Joan Evanoff
- Lynda Faith—Dorothy W. and George Liebe Memorials
- Sue Foran, John & Cathy Schroeder—In Honor of Beverly Molstre 1948 FHS Homecoming Queen
- Donna Frederickson—Rev. Leo H Buechler, Alma N. Buechler, Franklyn T. Frederickson, Margaret G. Frederickson, Robert Frederickson Memorials, in Honor of Donna Frederickson, Happy Anniversary Bob & Donna Frederickson, Ted Frederickson, Mary Frederickson, Frank Frederickson
- Scott Gerlach—In Loving Memory of my Wife Mary Jo Gerlach
- Beth George—Einar Sundin Memorial
- Georgia Growette—Evelyn Growette Memorial
- Mark Hauke—Lisa Ann Hauke “SP” Memorial
- Bob Hilke—Fritz & Dorothy Hilke Memorials
- Edith Holmstrom—Celebrating my parents A. Holmstrom & E. Holmstrom
- Kalman Johnson, Dianne Smalley, Patriot Properties—Karen Turnquist Johnson Memorial
- Russ & Violet Johnson—John Kalstad, William Morris, Russell Johnson Memorials
- Tom & Edna Karsnia—Gertie Coran Memorial
- Gene & Pat Kjellgren—In Honor of Eugene & Patricia Kjellgren
- Ron & Jessie Laurion—Paul Shaw Memorial
- Chuck & Carol Lepper—Clem Lepper Memorial
- Helen Loudon—Effie Hanover Memorial
- Jeffrey & Laurie Lightfoot, Carol Mannausau, Ward & Linda Merrill, Richard & Robin Tilander, Kay Wento—In Memory of Ardath ""Punk"" Wento Class of 1945
- Al & Wanda Linder—1903 Linder Century Farm
- Dean Lindstrom—Pearl and Gunnar Lindstrom Memorials
- Jim & Kathy McDaniel—In Honor of Jim & Kathy McDaniel (2019)
- David McKee & Lynn Naeckel—In Honor of David McKee & Lynn Naeckel
- Ward & Linda Merrill—Jim & Deloris Merrill Memorial
- Stuart & Cynde Milette—In Memory of Margaret Price Sathrum, John Charles Sathrum, Class of 1946 Howard W Milette, Class of 1946 Virginia Sathrum Milette
- Anne Nordstrom—Robert (Bob) Nordstrom Memorial
- George Schlieff—Edith (Edie) Schlieff Memorial
- Roman & Janet Schultheis—Clarence & Louise Larson Memorial, in Honor of My Granddaughter Valentine Michaela Louise Shickell
- Roman Schultheis—Merry Christmas Janet Schultheis, in Honor of Red & Janet Schultheis
- Darcie Schulz—Ciera ReNee Schulz, Kyle Olestad, Lester Nordlum, Lillian Nordlum, Richard Mandery Memorials
- Karen Shickell & Mike Busch—Louise & Clarence Larson Memorial
- Barb & Brian Smith—Marcia Bringedahl and Richard Bringedahl Memorials
- VFW Peter Graham Post 2948

- Seats given by Citizens for Backus/AB in Honor and Memory of: Marcia Bringedahl, Daniel Dilworth, Bob Jacobsen, Marie Karsnia, Otto Bremer Foundation, Minnesota Power, Red & Janet Schultheis, Thanks to Border Boxes, Jessie Laurion, Edie Schlieff, Kay Arnold, Corky Brindos, Jay Hokenson, Randi Whereley, In Memory of Catherine Townes (Sweatt) Mueller 1956-2019



We sincerely thank those who have invested in our Capital Improvement Fund through seat sponsorships!

Annual Seat Sponsorships:

- Judith Baratta—Vic & Opal Mannila Memorial
- Joan Barkovic—Honor of James Barkovic
- Bremer Bank—In Honor of Bremer Bank Employees
- Steve & Christy Earley—Bernard & Vera Earley Memorials
- Andrew & Dru Ann Faith—John & Gen Faith Memorial
- Mary Graves-Budak—Michael Kent Budak Memorial
- Jarlyn Hodel—Bob Hodel, Bud Hokenson, Jennie Hokenson Memorials
- Richard & Raynita Houglum—Dale Arnold Memorial
- Violet Johnson—In Honor of Violet Johnson
- Kim C. Manley—Jean Manley Memorial
- Julie Ann Manley-Hartje—LTC Roy Manley Memorial
- Arden McKnight—Birket Anderson, Lee Anderson, Craig McKnight Memorials
- Duane & Marilyn Mitchell—Kevin Mitchell Memorial
- Ruth Sumner—Gerald Sumner Memorial
- Roger & Mary Weum—James R. Liebe Memorial

Multiple Year Seat Sponsorships:

- Citizens for Backus/AB—In Honor of Ron Laurion
- Jessie Laurion—In Honor of Jessie Laurion
- Joan Barkovic—Robert Barkovic Memorial
- Tom & Jane Barthell—In Honor of Tom & Jane Barthell
- Jim & Joann Dornhecker—In Honor of Jim & Joann Dornhecker
- Marthan Enzmann—In Memory of Ralph & Arleen Enzmann (2019)
- Andrew Faith—John Faith, Sr. & Genevieve Faith Memorials
- Al Shannon—Eva Shannon Memorial
- Frank & Doreen Swendsen—Joe Swendsen Memorial
- Peggy Thomas—Lee Thomas Memorial

Annual Meeting
Wednesday, February 12, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Backus Community Center



900 Fifth Street
International Falls, Minnesota 56649
Phone: (218) 285-7225
Fax: (218) 285-7118
www.backusab.org | Facebook: BackusAB

For your safety, Backus is handicapped
accessible and equipped with
AEDs (Automated External Defibrillator)
located on the first and third floors.

MISSION STATEMENT:

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