

The John Faith Little Theater is a busy place



With the help of loads of volunteers, including Adam McIntyre, Josh Urban, and Donn Fuller (pictured above sewing curtains), the John Faith Little Theater has been transformed. Over the summer months, the space has been used for concerts, dance classes, trivia nights, and a recital space. Thanks to the elevator, the space is now ready for everyone to enjoy a variety of activities.

In the future, it may be used as a small theater venue for one acts, readings, and performances with a more relaxed atmosphere than we have on the main stage.



From the Director's Desk

Hello from Backus Community Center!

People can't help but notice all of the changes that are happening at the AB school. We are excited for the day to come when families settle in to the beautiful new apartments. Watch for announcements for the opening events at AB!

This season in the Backus life has been very busy for everyone here, too.

- We came through our first year with the new heating system and are preparing for this winter season. We're preparing for our second winter; maintaining and fine-tuning operations and temperature control are ongoing.
- Backus is partnering with MN Power and the Alexander Baker team to install new outdoor transformers for each building. This electrical update is a significant project for Backus that brings great service and safety benefits.
- Our natural gas line was moved and a new meter installed.
- The John Faith Little Theater has new wiring, lighting, and fresh paint. We have more that we want to do in this space yet, but for now we're having some fun down there! It's a great little unknown spot for concerts, plays, etc. Plans are starting to take shape for community events to start up this fall; keep watching for announcements!
- Old Backus tables, cabinets, and shelves have been refurbished for use in our conference room and rental spaces.
- Our music and arts programs are growing! Orchestra. Music lessons. Vocal lessons. Community Band. Theater. Community Choir. Jazz band. There are more people getting involved every day. Come join the fun!

Backus needs your input. Our Arts and Programming Committee works to provide shows/activities for our community, and we want to know about the kinds of events that make you say, **"I want to go to that!"** There is a survey document in this newsletter. Help us serve you better; please tell us about the things you would like to see at Backus.

Backus is full of life. Daycare. Head Start. Dance. Pickleball. Volleyball. Wrestling. Bridge. Puzzles. Basketball. Veterans. KCC-TV. Music. Theater. Meetings. Training. Events. Celebrations. Back-to-school. Ober Island comes ashore. Driver's tests. Grief support. Indoor walking. There is so much good happening here!

Lois Lundin—Executive Director



Backus Community Center is pleased to welcome a new member to the building.

Kootasca Community Action will now be a part of our center and we believe it will be a great partnership.

Stop in to see them and see how they are working to make our community better.

VOLLEYBALL

Every Thursday
7:30PM
Backus Community Center
900 5th Street

\$2.00 per night

All skill levels are welcome.

If you are under 18 a waiver must be signed by a parent or guardian.

BACKUS STAFF

Lois Lundin,
Executive Director

Hoa Sobczynski,
Business Manager

Alyssa Crawford,
Office Assistant

Darcy Sullivan,
KCC-TV Director

Michelle Boelk
Event Coordinator

PICKLEBALL

WEDNESDAY'S 7:00PM
SUNDAY'S 5:00PM

BACKUS COMMUNITY CENTER
900 5th Street, International Falls, MN

a waiver must be signed for anyone under 18

\$2.00 a night

United Way selects Backus as Agency of the Year

It was a true honor for Backus to be selected as United Way Northeastern Minnesota's Agency of the Year.

The United Way of Northeastern Minnesota raises funds throughout the year primarily via workplace campaigns and events to support nonprofits and direct service programs throughout Lake of the Woods and Koochiching Counties as well as the Iron Range.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Executive Director Erin Shay recognized Backus as Agency of the Year saying Backus has connected many

International Falls area programs and individuals to UWNEMNs programs and services, and community steps would not have been brought to International Falls without this partnership.

As one of United Way's newest members, much has been accomplished within the past two years, and much will be accomplished in the future.

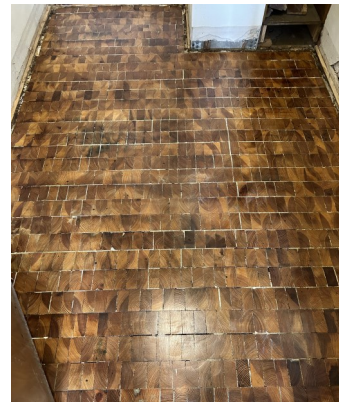


Many thanks to Gene Edberg for restoring the meeting room tables! Fabulous!



Remember When?

This flooring was uncovered in the refurbishing process. Remember where this was?



Thank you to all of our volunteers and organizations who help with office work, newsletters, delivering flyers, setup, tear down, baking, cleaning, events, community café, summer lunch, concerts, and programs. Your dedication and time given to Backus has not gone unnoticed. Volunteers are a valued asset to our community, and we cannot **THANK YOU** enough!

Performing Arts Grant provides opportunities

At least three dozen young people stepped out of their comfort zones this June and tried new artistic endeavors. Students from ages three to 16 danced, sang, and acted their way through a two-week “camp” with guest choreographer Alexandria Gilbertson.

It was a full day for those who chose to be involved in all aspects of the workshop, beginning at 9 a.m. and running, for some, until 3:30 p.m. Plus, Ms. Gilbertson offered free ballroom dance classes each Friday evening. **(Below: Keith Boelk learns the Foxy.)**

We hope to offer something similar again next year. Maybe with adults this time. What do you think?



Borealis Bards have musical hit with new directors

Under the direction of Michelle Boelk, Elsa Swanson, and numerous others, the western/musical “Is There a Doctor in the House?” brought some new faces to the stage.

A number of people were surprised by the cast and their formerly hidden singing and dancing talents when the Tim Kelly and Bill Francoeur comedy came to life on the Backus stage.

Enhanced by a live music accompaniment led by Jeanne Strand, the play was a two-night hit with people coming the second night to bring their friends.

Mistaken identity, star-crossed lovers, and confusion reigns in this family-friendly farce, with a cast and crew of at least 40 people who worked diligently to bring the play to the community. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this a success!

IS THERE A
DOCTOR
IN THE HOUSE?
The Musical
May 23-24
7:00 pm



Puzzle Lending Library

Try this for the weekend!

A puzzle collection has been made available for the community. They are perfect for a rainy day or for weekend family fun.

These puzzles are in a variety of subjects, levels of difficulty, and great for all age groups.

Want to give it a try? It's so easy! Go to the west hallway at Backus and choose a puzzle. Take it home, put it together, and then bring the puzzle back to Backus. Repeat as often as you'd like!

Do you have puzzles you'd like to donate? Bring them to Backus and just add them to the collection.

We're excited to offer this to our community. Please help us spread the word about this program.



St. Thomas Saints Share

The end of the St. Thomas school year means a bounty of snacks remain.

The students brought over bags and boxes of goodies to add to the lunch program's considerable selection.

Thanks to these generous students, the many young people who avail themselves of the Backus lunch program have a good supply of fruit cups, and other yummy additions to already great choices.

*"How beautiful a day can be
when kindness touches it!"*

George Elliston

New life for old shelves

These shelves, taken from the hallway by the Backus kitchen, have been revitalized for a new life by Gene Edberg and Joe Martinez.

They make a stunning addition to the meeting rooms and will be used for several future purposes.

These sturdy shelves are rich in color and character. They were initially removed from their original location to make room for the Veteran's Display Case. Backus is thrilled to have them where guests can continue to appreciate them.

Thanks to Gene and Joe!





Riverfest 2024

The stage was ready, the vendors were ready, the cornhole boards and volleyball nets were set, and classic cars were just rolling in, but the rain was unrelenting. Thankfully we had a contingency plan for the band and we were able to move the show to the main stage at Backus.

Chris Kroeze put on a GREAT show, and the many people who attended the free concert were not disappointed.

Mark your calendars for July 1, 2025!

Plans are underway for food trucks and activities and GREAT summer music at the Irvin N. Anderson Amphitheater!

KCC-TV receives funding for new equipment

For 20 years, KCC-TV has been one of our community's greatest links to what is happening in and around International Falls. Today, people have very timely access to view local government, school board and many organization's meetings as well as community events and happenings. People can access KCC-TV via the KCC-TV channel on YouTube, on the Backus website, Facebook, and on local cable channel 7.

In March of this year, the KCC-TV equipment that pushed broadcast out to Midco failed. The antiquated computer equipment had been "Frankensteined" many times and it simply couldn't take any more. When our technicians deemed the system was beyond repair, it was time to invest in new equipment.

With the generous help of the **City of International Falls Economic Development Authority**, Backus purchased new equipment for KCC-TV. It was very evident to the City and to Backus that this was an essential service to the citizens of our community. The equipment we selected meets our needs, came with a few consumer requested upgrades and has capacity to be enhanced in the future when funding will support it.

KCC-TV NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT.

Please consider sending a contribution or becoming a member of our local public television station. We are committed to providing exemplary service to keep you informed of the happenings in our community, but we need your financial help.

If you like watching your grandchildren's holiday programs, or the Christmas parade, or City Council and County meetings, or entertainment events that are happening at local venues, or any of the other programming that we offer, please consider a donation to Backus Community Center for KCC-TV operations.



Exciting News!

Tuesday Musicals is now here at Backus Community Center and will be starting back up this school year. Keep your eye out for some fundraising events and activities to help raise money for local music students to attend summer music camps in Duluth MN, Bemidji MN, and Dunseith ND. Stay tuned for more details.

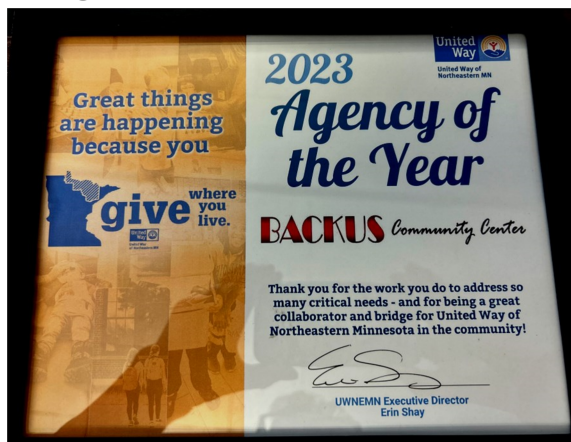


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www.backusab.org

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August 2024



Address Label

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Donna Frederickson
Jim Lyman
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Molly Bragg, *Emeritus*

*The next board meetings is Sept. 10th at
5:15PM in room 101/102.*

BACKUS VALUES YOUR INPUT!

Do you have comments, questions, suggestions,
or concerns regarding Backus?
Please contact the Backus Board at
backusboard@backusab.org

COMING SOON TO BACKUS

Community Café

5:00-6:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays

Community Choir

5:30—7 p.m. each Thursday
Free to join

Children's Choir

5:30 p.m. each Tuesday
For grades 4-8 - \$5 each session

Bonfire Heart

Thursday, August 29, 7 p.m.
John Faith Little Theater