

Stepping Stones

A publication of HearthStone of Wisconsin, Inc.
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Please consider a tax deductible donation to HearthStone. We need your support.

Letter From The President

Hello friends,

We recently closed another successful year for HearthStone, and this time with some return to normalcy in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. As you will see throughout this newsletter, in the summer months when COVID cases were dropping, we held a few small, socially-distanced outdoor events that followed the recommendations of the CDC. We thank everyone who played their part to ensure everyone was safe, and it was wonderful to see some of your smiling faces!

While our indoor fall and winter events were still on hold this year due a spike in COVID variant cases, we are hopeful that the events we were able to hold are a positive step in the direction of a return to our regular scheduling. We are eager to see what this summer and year hold!

Although we could not hold our in-person fundraiser event, we were very grateful for the outpouring of support that we received through donations. Those funds will go toward any events we are able to host this summer and to other great initiatives such as the education scholarship, which was awarded to two more students this year, and Christmas gifts that we delivered to our participants. Additionally, as with many organizations, COVID has brought on additional expenses when we hold in-person events, such as the hand sanitizer, masks and individually packaged catered meals that promote safety. We are so thankful to our donors who continue to make all of our efforts possible, and who have worked with us as we've navigated uncharted waters as an organization the past two years of the pandemic.

Again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Another positive for our organization is that we are now offering hybrid monthly meetings for our board of directors, with the option to attend in-person in one of RCS Empowers' conference rooms that they have graciously allowed us to use, or to tune in via Google Meet. It has been a positive experience for our directors to be able to connect again in person, with the option to still meet online for those who feel safer that way. We hope this "hybrid" idea can carry into our coming initiatives.

As we settle into a new year, I hope everyone will follow along on our website, hearthstonewi.org, and Facebook page (facebook.com/hearthstonewi) to get more updates on this "hybrid" HearthStone experience, which we hope will include a healthy mix of safe, in-person opportunities, as well as online-only "HearthStone @ Home" events and resources. Our goal is to meet you at your comfort level and avoid transmission.

We hope you will follow our journey this year and join in the ride!

Cheers to a new year,

Lois R. Curry



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"HearthStone is a self-help and advocacy organization for people with disabilities and their families."

HearthStone Delivers Holiday Cheer, Again!

HearthStone's board of directors and advisory board members became Santa's special helpers again this year. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, our organization was able to hand-deliver a special holiday gift bag to over 100 of our participants for the SECOND year in a row this past December!

The gift bags included a warm winter beanie and a coffee mug with the HearthStone logo, a Chocolate Santa, a packet of hot cocoa and a candy cane. Most gifts were hand delivered, but one was mailed to an out-of-town participant. Bags were also distributed to our recent education scholarship winners.



The bags were assembled by board members Kris Williams, Karen Post and Jill Spielvogel. A big thanks to them and all who delivered the bags!

It was a small token to our participants after our in-person holiday events remained on hold due to rising rates of COVID variants in the winter. We loved seeing all our participants' smiling faces and holiday cheer, and we hope the gifts reminded them of how important they are to us and our community.

We still have a few remaining bags that were undeliverable due to outdated addresses on file. If you did not receive a bag and/or have had a change of address recently, please fill out the membership form here:

hearthstonewi.org/free-hearthstone-membership-request/

In the comments section, specify if you are a new member or an existing member updating your information, and please let us know in the comments section if you would like a bag or did not receive one. Thank you!

HearthStone Virtual Holiday Party Brings Santa and Laughter

Here at HearthStone, we really love the holidays, and the past few years, we've enjoyed getting into the spirit safely and virtually!

HearthStone hosted its 2021 Holiday Party virtually on December 22. Around 10-12 HearthStone participants and friends gathered around their laptops and computers to spread some holiday cheer. We sang and enjoyed holiday music, thanks to board member Fred Brown and his cello.

Santa stopped in at our virtual party again this year! Santa said he saw us having a blast at the HearthStone picnic—how does he know where we are?! HearthStone friends are definitely on Santa's "nice" list. The holiday jokes and riddles kept us laughing.

And, what's a holiday party without our pets? We had a couple of dogs, a cat, and even one of Fred's chickens join in the fun!

We all have happy memories of our party to keep us warm and smiling through the winter.



HearthStone Participants Participate in Clean Up

Our HearthStone participants love to give back to the community. This past July, they helped out in a very unique way by removing invasive species in our local area in a socially-distanced outdoor event.

About 10 participants and friends joined a DNR representative and Steve Klock from Camp Y-Koda to help remove invasive species from a stretch of the hike/bike trail adjacent to the dog park on South 18th Street in Sheboygan.

We started out with a tailgate party and a short program about the undesirable plants we would be removing. With gloves, clippers and rakes, we cleared buckthorn, phragmite grasses and honeysuckle.

After several hours, a good section of the trail was opened up for native species to thrive. Thanks to all who came out to help!



Annual HearthStone Picnic Returns

One of the events that HearthStone participants have missed most since the start of the pandemic is our end-of-summer picnic.

Last summer, HearthStone board members followed Sheboygan County COVID protocols and determined the time was right to offer a safe, socially-distanced outdoor event for HearthStone participants.

On September 10, about 80 HearthStone participants, caregivers, friends and board members gathered for a picnic at Rochester Park in Sheboygan Falls. Everybody was so excited and happy to visit with each other!

We listened to music and played outdoor games. Board member Fred Brown and Tom Brown coached participant teams in a spirited game of kickball. HearthStone provided delicious, individual boxed lunches and beverages for all picnic-goers. Board members chatted with caregivers as they completed the caregiver survey. The weather was perfect!



Picnic goers
enjoy a game
together

We look forward to more in-person social events with our HearthStone friends in 2022.

HEARTHSTONE GOES SAILING!

In July, HearthStone assessed the COVID situation in Sheboygan County and decided to hold a few safe outdoor events. To kick off the summer, our participants had fun learning to sail with SEAS, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating affordable pathways for the community to safely enjoy boating on Lake Michigan.

Between participants, caregivers and SEAS staff, about 10 total sailors took to the water for a lesson. There were two sailboats. Everyone lucked out with the most perfect summer weather for sailing, with calm waters on a hot, sunny day.

Participants learned a lot throughout the event. They helped put up the sails and learned all about safety and how to use the sailboats.

After finishing up on the water, HearthStone provided lunch for friends and family to dig in and talk all about their day. Everyone enjoyed the sub sandwiches, chips, cookies and beverages.

A great time was had by all. To learn more about SEAS, including their adaptive sailing resources, visit www.seasheboygan.org.



JOIN IN A SHAM-ROCKIN' GOOD TIME AT VIRTUAL ST. PATTY'S DAY PARTY

Top o' the morning to you, HearthStone lads and lasses!

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with your HearthStone friends at the virtual HearthStone St. Patrick's Day Party. Join in the laughter as leprechauns (board member Fred Brown and Tom Brown) bring on the shenanigans! Share an Irish riddle, wear green and be Irish for the evening!



DATE: Thursday, March 17, 2022

TIME: 7pm - 8pm

HOW TO JOIN:

At the time of the party, simply click <https://meet.google.com/muu-qjpm-azc> or type it into your browser. For Google Meet, you do not need a special account. You can choose whether to share your video and/or use a microphone, if your device has those, or to chat by typing. The link will also be on our website at hearthstonewi.org.

HearthStone Selects Education Scholarship Winners, Caregiver Memorial Winner

Every year, HearthStone awards two \$1,000 education scholarships to local students with a cognitive disability who are pursuing higher education. We are proud to announce that our brand new 2021 recipient is Faith Lewis, who graduated Kohler High School in 2021. HearthStone also reselected Jesse Anderson, one of our 2020 recipients, to receive the scholarship again. Both students plan to attend Lakeshore Technical College this year. Congratulations to Faith and Jesse!

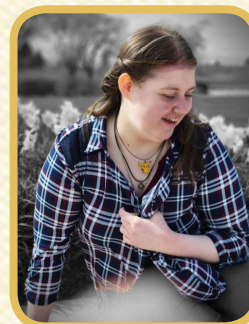
Additionally, Faith's mother, Dawn Lewis, received the \$500 Claudia Ulatowski Caregiver Memorial, which was established by Claudia's son-in-law Alex Curry and daughter Leah Curry to honor caregivers and recognize all that they do. Congratulations to Dawn!



From Right: Dawn Lewis, Faith Lewis

HOW TO APPLY FOR HEARTHSTONE'S EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

We are now accepting applications for our 2022 scholarships. We offer two \$1,000 scholarships to Sheboygan County students with an identified intellectual disability, traumatic brain impairment, or autism. The scholarships are awarded to students who are planning to attend, and are enrolled/enrolling in, a university, college, technical school, vocational school, or an approved apprenticeship program.



Faith Lewis



Jesse Anderson

TO APPLY: visit hearthstonewi.org/scholarship/.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE CLAUDIA ULATOWSKI CAREGIVER MEMORIAL

This memorial is in memory of Wisconsin native Claudia Ulatowski, who passed away suddenly in 2015 after serving as primary caregiver to three sons with cognitive disabilities. A family member who is a caregiver to someone with a cognitive disability may apply for the memorial and use the money to improve their own quality of life.

TO APPLY: visit hearthstonewi.org/the-claudia-ulatowski-caregiver-memorial-fund/

THANK YOU 2021 DONORS!

A HUGE thank you to all our 2021 donors who made everything you see in this letter possible. We appreciate you remembering HearthStone in your generous giving, and we know our participants do, too!

- John C & Katherine B Miller Foundation
- David Sachse
- Julie Leonhard
- Rich & Bev Testwuide
- Frank & Terri Sterzen
- Jon & Carol Rost
- Alex & Leah Curry
- Janet Sartori
- Randy & Rita Romanoski
- Tom & Ruth Rost
- Robert & Peggy Feider
- Jonathon & Nancy Moulton
- Courtney Theobald
- Conrad & Barbara Barrows
- Kiwanis Club of Sheboygan Falls
- Ronald & Barbara Preder
- Dennis Ketterman
- Alan & Pam Rudnick
- Carla Ross & Greg Bohn
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- Corinthia Van Orsdol
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- Nancy & Steven Mannchen
- Susan White
- Ray Cary
- Anthony Fischer
- Jenny Hanson
- Lisa & Sharon Limberg
- Tom & Linda Weber
- Perla Boland
- Jena Hoftiezer
- All those who donated to Larry Samet's Birthday Fundraiser on Facebook
- All those who donated to Jon Rost's Birthday Fundraiser on Facebook

And thank you to everyone who made HearthStone the recipient of your Amazon Smile funds! As a note, anyone who shops on Amazon, if you use smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com, Amazon donates a percentage of your purchase to your specified non-profit, and at no additional cost to you! Check out the bottom section of our Donate page for more information, hearthstonewi.org/donate.

THANKS TO LARRY SAMET FOR 9 YEARS AT HEARTHSTONE



Recently, our former HearthStone vice president, Larry Samet, decided to step down from the Board of Directors. He remains a great friend of HearthStone and a part of the advisory board.

Larry served with HearthStone for nearly 9 years and has played a pivotal role in the organization's success in the past decade. He was instrumental in organizing HearthStone's Legislative Bowling Party event that connected our participants with local legislators. He was also a part of HearthStone's advocacy committee.

He was one of the driving forces behind HearthStone's education scholarship and served as an important resource to the board with his many Sheboygan community connections. He served on the Sheboygan School Board and was a citizen member of the Sheboygan County Health and Human Services Committee. He is also an active member of the Kiwanis and has been instrumental in organizing several charity concerts at the Weill Center.

We deeply thank Larry for all that he has contributed to HearthStone's success and our participants, and for his many years of service to our organization!

HEARTHSTONE WELCOMES LOGAN WOOD TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Logan Wood joined HearthStone this February as our newest Board Member. He is an Associate at Rohde

Dales, LLP in Sheboygan. Logan is thrilled to be a part of HearthStone, and we are happy to have him and his experience joining our board.



In his free time, Logan enjoys spending time with his family, reading, and being outdoors. Logan also enjoys playing tennis, golf, and curling. He can be found cheering on the Packers, Badgers, Bucks and Brewers.

Did Your Address Change? Or Do You Want to Go Digital?

HearthStone participants and supporters, have you recently changed your address or plan to do so soon? Please make sure to update your information by visiting hearthstonewi.org/free-hearthstone-membership-request/ and typing in your new contact info. If you are a HearthStone participant who did not receive a Christmas gift from us due to a change of address, please let us know you would still like one on the “comments” section of the online form. Thanks for keeping us in the loop!

Would you like to go green and start receiving HearthStone’s newsletter and mailing via email only?

Let us know by emailing us at info@hearthstonewi.org or update your email via the online membership form and let us know you want to go paperless in the “comments” section.

Newsletter date: Spring 2022

Volume 2, Issue 2



HearthStone's Board of Directors - 2022

- | | |
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| • Leah Curry, <i>President</i> | • Kathy Manny, <i>Education Chair</i> |
| • Patti Saunders, <i>Vice President</i> | • Daphne Peterson, <i>Advocacy Chair</i> |
| • Kris Williams, <i>Secretary</i> | • Karen Post, <i>Social</i> |
| • Alex Curry, <i>Treasurer</i> | • Angie Shaw, <i>Advocacy</i> |
| • Fred Brown, <i>Social</i> | • Jill Spielvogel, <i>Social Chair</i> |
| • Geralyn Leannah, <i>Education</i> | • Logan Wood, <i>Advocacy</i> |

HearthStone Advisory Board - 2022

- Jon Rost, *Former President/Parent*
- Carol Rost, *Parent/Advocate*
- Frank Sterzen, *Parent/Advocate*
- Craig McFadden, *Advocate*
- Denise Drews, *Advocate*
- Cindy Sook, *ADRC*
- Jody Merenick, *RCS Empowers*
- Jeff Everett, *RCS Empowers*
- Dana Traas, *DVR*
- Larry Samet, *Former VP/Parent*
- Chris Post, *Advocate*
- Ashley Streck, *Advocate/Marketing*