

AARP: Plan to offer 'Small Towne Holiday Feast' wins AARP Wisconsin grant

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SHARON, WI - A proposal submitted by Small Towne Preservations, Inc. in Sharon to put on a "Small Towne Holiday Feast" for folks who are in need or alone during the holidays has been selected to receive this month's AARP Wisconsin "Small Dollar, Big Impact" grant.

Small Towne Preservations is a community-based, non-profit organization with board members who all reside in the Village of Sharon and meet monthly to discuss community events. The \$1,000 grant will be used cover all costs associated with the feast, which will be held on Friday, Dec. 23.

"Our community has a turkey dinner fundraiser and a few restaurants have holiday meals, but for those on a budget the meals can be too much to afford," said Amanda Rose, treasurer of the organization, who submitted the grant application. "We want to make this a get-together for those who need the companionship as well as a hot wholesome meal. We aim to feed the soul just as much as the body."

The feast will include a free dinner and a small gift for all attendees. Rose said meal offerings will consist of turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, casseroles, salads, and desserts, all served buffet-style. Volunteers will prepare and serve the meals, then clean up afterwards.

The dinner will be held at Small Towne Lounge, 114 Plain St. "The space holds about 25 people so they will be limiting meals to that number, which will give our guests a personal and cozy environment and the ability for guests and volunteers to converse and reminisce," Rose said.

“We will also be showing classic Christmas films during dinner. We hope to be able to do two servings in the following years to double our impact.”

The feast will be open to anyone of any age, “but we know of several seniors who are alone and on a very tight budget. They are our main focus group for this event,” Rose said. “As a secondary benefit we hope that those in attendance will get to know each other better and create a network to rely on.”

While the feast is free, Rose said they need people to pre-register in person at either the Small Towne Lounge or the Small Towne Market, 201 Baldwin St. For more information, including the start time for the feast, visit smalltownepreservations.com and click the events link. Or call 608-289-9555. Rose explained that Small Towne Preservations is dedicated to preserving the historic downtown of Sharon.

“Our main focus is to restore the many vacant downtown buildings, creating a vibrant shopping and business district for our residents and out-of-town visitors. Along with the historic buildings we are also focused on preserving the small-town way of life. Helping neighbors, shopping locally, and taking pride in where we live are the backbone of our mission,” she said.

AARP Wisconsin is awarding grants each month throughout 2022 to projects across the state that are designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age.

“We really appreciate all that AARP does with these grants throughout the year. We’re excited to be one of the recipients and to be able to provide this event for our community,” Rose said.

Judges selected this project after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over Wisconsin.

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have a remarkable impact on the shaping of local communities,” said Amber Miller, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin. “This project hits the nail right on the head.”

AARP Wisconsin’s launched its “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant program in 2020 and is now in its third year of helping proposed projects move forward in rural and



urban parts of the state. The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. For more information on the program, visit www.aarp.org/WIsdbi