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Contact: Jim Flaherty, Communications Director

Office 608/ 286-6308 – Cell 608/ 698-0928, jflaherty@aarpp.org

Plan to fund 3 intergenerational craft sessions in Greendale wins AARP WI ‘Small Dollar, Big Impact’ grant

GREENDALE, WI – A proposal submitted by the Village of Greendale Health Department to fund activities at two upcoming public crafting sessions and a third session at a senior living facility in Greendale has been selected to receive an AARP Wisconsin “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant.

The \$1,000 grant will be used to fund craft materials, supplies, snacks, and use of the event facilities at two separate crafting sessions at the Field Workshop in Greendale. A third event, to be held at the Harbour Village, will offer residents at the senior living facility the opportunity to invite a grandchild to join them and work together on craft activities.

The dates for all three crafting events will soon be posted on Greendale’s health department [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page once they are available.

Organizers say the events are designed to strengthen intergenerational bonding and contribute to improved mental health and resiliency of older adults. Programs like these “can enhance confidence, self-esteem, and social skills while contributing to their emotional and overall health and well-being,” said Shawne Johnson, Public Health Manager for the Greendale Health Department, who submitted the grant proposal.

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. Judges selected this project for a \$1,000 grant after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over the state.

“Our panel of judges appreciated that the Village of Greendale is incorporating the intergenerational piece into the public craft sessions,” said Amber Miller, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin. “The in-person interaction between people of all ages allows for an opportunity to learn from one another and combat isolation.”

Johnson said the health department is deeply appreciative of the grant and is excited to host the crafting events. “We look forward to carrying out this project as we know a close relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is mutually beneficial when it comes to the health and well-being of both,” she said.

In January, a survey of older adults was completed by members of the Greendale community that asked residents how they like to interact with their grandchildren, what challenges make it hard to connect with them, and what would help them create stronger relationships with their grandchildren.

This grant will enable Greendale to use those survey results to make an impact with intergenerational programming by sponsoring these three community events. The first two events will take place at the Field Workshop, which is an all-ages art studio and tinker lab where guests can explore their creative side through hands-on projects.

“These events are targeted at grandparents and their grandchildren and will involve them working side-by-side on creative projects of their choice as a way to participate in fun and interactive bonding activities,” Johnson said. Hot cocoa and cookies will be provided along with conversation starter cards on the snack table.

The Successful Aging in Greendale (SAGE) committee's Livable Community Action Plan includes activities related to increasing social participation and reducing social isolation of older adults. When this project was presented at a recent SAGE meeting, members were inspired by its uniqueness and got involved early on in developing the plan on how to best promote the survey to grandparents.

Members also brainstormed possible community activities which could be implemented to increase bonding between grandparents and grandchildren. The project activities will be promoted to the health department's website and social media sites.

“The Greendale Health Department has a focus on promoting wellness and improving the health of all community members. Our values include health equity, partnerships, stewardship, and unity,” Johnson said. “We intuitively know the value of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, but we have never previously implemented specific activities to strengthen that bond.”

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.

"This project fits perfectly with the spirit and intent of the Small Dollar, Big Impact grant program," said AARP Wisconsin Interim State Director Christina FitzPatrick. "Our goal is to support communities as they make positive changes that inspire long-term progress on livable issues. This proposal hits that nail right on the head."

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

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