

HBF CELEBRATES ARTS & CREATIVITY

SUMMER 2008



Dear Friends,

In all their various forms, the arts play an important role in our lives. Not only can they inspire an audience, but the creative process can transform those who are expressing themselves.

For the past 17 years, the Helen Bader Foundation's driving force has been to live out the passions and ideals of my late mother. Throughout much of her life, the arts played a special role, aiding her connections with others, while offering an outlet for her own creative spirit.

My mother felt that everyone benefits from the arts, and in that spirit, the Foundation has welcomed opportunities to weave creativity into our various program areas, from our young to our elders. This special edition of *HBF Currents* offers a glimpse into some of the arts-inspired projects that more than \$8.7 million in Foundation funding has made possible.

Listen, see, and experience. We welcome you to take advantage of all the arts have to offer and share our passion for bringing out the best in others.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bader
President



MAJOR GIFTS elegance, restored

Former Milwaukee firefighter Donald Jackson doesn't consider himself a retiree, at least when it comes to his active schedule. From mentoring youth at a north side Boys and Girls Club, to getting in a few laps at the YMCA pool, he likes to stay engaged.

Beyond those commitments, he has long held a passion for music. For more than 15 years, the **Wisconsin Conservatory of Music** has been an ongoing part of Jackson's schedule, through a steady stream of classical guitar classes. There, his instructors push him to tackle challenging baroque pieces.

"It's one of the hardest instruments to master, but it's become part of my life," he said. "At this point, I can't imagine putting it down."

Jackson (pictured with instructor Raymond Mueller) is one of hundreds of students, the Conservatory inspires every year. Since 1932, the Conservatory has been housed in an elegant mansion overlooking Lake Michigan, but for decades, its learning spaces were improvised into what still felt like someone else's home. In the 1990's, the Conservatory desperately needed to reconfigure its space to better

continued on page 3

arts in education

MORE CREATIVE CLASSROOMS

In schools across the nation, tighter budgets have forced dedicated arts programming to take a back seat to other priorities. To give underserved city children greater exposure to the creative arts, the Foundation has launched Arts in Education, a three-year initiative that marks the Foundation's largest commitment to arts programming in its 17-year history.

Four agencies are sharing more than \$1.3 million to connect teachers, artists, and other key partners, toward

expanding and strengthening hands-on creative experiences. Beginning this fall, the agencies will strengthen the art curriculum in selected elementary schools within Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), as well as after school and summer arts programming at MPS-affiliated Community Learning Centers and a network of neighborhood youth centers.

Awarded in conjunction with a MPS Board effort to attract greater private support for enhanced arts programming for students, the grants will support:

- **Arts at Large, Inc.:** \$676,300 to integrate art, music, and the performing arts into the curriculum of eight MPS elementary schools that currently have little or no formal arts instruction, reaching more than 3,000 students over three years.

- **COA Youth and Family Centers:** \$450,000 to work with partners in the United Neighborhood Community Centers of Milwaukee network (pictured) to expand the diversity and quality of art programs offered in members' after-school and summer programs, reaching more than 8,000 youth and their families.

- **Cultural Alliance of Greater Milwaukee, Inc.:** \$115,140 to create online resources to better connect teachers and arts coordinators citywide with artists trained in arts education.

- **Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Inc.:** \$109,500 for the Nonprofit Management Fund to advise 15 small and mid-sized arts organizations on expanding service capacity and linking with participating schools and centers.

"An investment in arts education for Milwaukee's most deserving students will have a dramatic impact for years to come," said Teri Sullivan, co-director of Arts at Large. "As our workforce demands more creativity, students in Milwaukee will be equipped to rise to the challenge." ❖

economic development



MAKING THEIR MARK

At the corner of 68th and Center Streets, a pair of new streetside markers welcomes passers-by to the Enderis Park neighborhood, crafted by hand with the same Lannon stone that graces many nearby homes. The result of three years of resident planning, the markers are the latest effort to highlight and build upon the strengths of this slice of Milwaukee's west side.

To leverage this and other beautification projects into a stronger neighborhood, the **Enderis Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.** is

using a \$20,000 Foundation grant to not only to enhance its surroundings, but to also link stakeholders in the process.

"A positive neighborhood identity provides real value in the housing market," says Bruce Cameron, organizer for the Association and a long-time resident. "People do not buy just homes; they know that the value of their investment derives from everything that surrounds them, and each visible improvement like the markers is a billboard for a neighborhood investing in itself."

The second component of the grant funds the Best Darn Exterior

Improvement Contest, where 50 Enderis Park homeowners and landlords compete to see who can make the biggest "curb appeal" improvement to their landscaping or home/apartment facade. Contestants have promised to make more than \$200,000 in improvements, just in materials.

The grant was awarded through the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative, a partnership with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation to increase resident connections in selected mid-market neighborhoods. Based on a successful model in Baltimore, the Initiative focuses on areas that are generally stable, yet may risk decline due to quality-of-life problems facing adjacent neighborhoods, such as crime or empty storefronts. The Helen Bader Foundation awarded three other agencies grants of \$20,000 each through the Initiative: **Agape Community Center of Milwaukee, Inc.;** **Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc.;** and **Sherman Park Community Association, Inc.** ❖

Alzheimer's and aging



A LATE-LIFE SPARK

For older adults looking to keep their mind sharp, they'll find it's never too late to tap into a creative streak. A public television documentary filmed in five states, including Wisconsin, seeks to share that fundamental message with

a national audience through three individuals whose imaginations took flight during the second act of life.

Narrated by broadcasting legend Walter Cronkite, *Do Not Go Gently* shares how music, dance, quilting, and other pursuits can inspire and challenge audiences of all ages. A new \$25,000 grant to Green Bay-based **Cooperative**

Educational Service Agency No. 7 (CESA 7) will expand national outreach efforts for the documentary.

CESA 7 will offer mini-grants to serve as an incentive for outreach projects in six diverse communities that localize the themes in the film, creating

opportunities for creative aging discussions.

"It is encouraging when older adults respond with vigor and humor about their own tactics of aging creatively," said Melissa Godoy, the film's director. "What surprises me the most is how many older adults express deep concern about the creative health of children. They raise the importance of imagination throughout the life cycle."

The documentary features a range of creative minds, from the late composer Leo Ornstein, who died at 109 in Green Bay, to the renowned quilters of Gee's Bend, Alabama (pictured). It also includes perspective from Gene Cohen, Ph.D., of George Washington University, a national expert on the relationship between creativity and aging. ❖

(Photo courtesy CESA 7)

ELEGANCE, RESTORED

continued from front page

reflect a teaching and performance mission, while bringing out the finer details that were lost to wear and tear.

To launch the Conservatory's renovation drive, in 1997 the Foundation awarded its first Major Gift, a \$1 million grant in recognition of Helen Bader's personal belief in the institution's mission as a onetime student. The \$5.3 million modernization helped to update nearly every functional aspect of the facility, while maintaining its original charm.

The post-renovation Conservatory is better equipped to serve the hundreds of students who come for instruction each week. On its upper floors, its rehearsal rooms offer plenty of light and often lake views, and are insulated for both weather and acoustics.

At the north end of the Conservatory's main floor, the Helen Bader Recital Hall is the facility's premier performance space. What once was a grand ballroom can comfortably accommodate more than 100 audience members, and it plays host to dozens of concerts and recitals each year.

As grand as the Conservatory's east side home is, the organization's reach is much broader, serving thousands more students through programs held at schools and satellite locations throughout the metro area. ❖

sankofa - youth development



YOUNG WRITERS SHINE

"His voice sounded like he had nails in his throat."

For middle school student Dominique Battle, a short essay on the previous day's trip to the Milwaukee Art Museum didn't focus on the obvious, say, the art on the wall or the ornamental wings atop the building. For her, the most vivid impression was the raspy voice of a security guard.

At the **Woodland Pattern** literary arts center, creative writing is a vehicle to get city youth to think about the

world in new ways, and to express themselves in their own unique style.

Out of a storefront in Milwaukee's culturally eclectic Riverwest neighborhood, it offers literature and writing classes through after-school workshops and summer programming for youth of various ages. A \$3,000 Foundation grant is helping continue the program year round.

"Too often these children are presented with writing as sort of a punishment," said Anne Kingsbury, executive director. "We want them to become extremely comfortable in sharing their thoughts, opinions, and feelings, and show them how to do it on paper."

Serving more than 300 youth each year, Woodland's reading and writing programs aim to connect literature to other art forms, including guest artists representing theater, yoga, visual art, music, and film. The youth pay only a modest fee to participate, and at the end of the session, they can select \$100 worth of books from the center's bookshelves. According to Kingsbury, it's become a powerful incentive to keep the students engaged. ❖



STIRRING SPIRITS

From string music to finger paints, arts experiences of all types can add to the cultural vibrancy of Milwaukee's Jewish community. **Ruach, Inc.** is a growing nonprofit that looks to bring those cultural experiences to community members of all ages, and ultimately deepen their connection to their faith.

Ruach (Hebrew for "spirit") originated four years ago and its efforts have grown throughout the metro area. The agency recently received a three-year, \$40,000 Foundation grant to help

continue its programming, the latest in a total of \$155,000 in Foundation grants for Ruach-led programs.

As part of its programming, Ruach has arranged performances that connect Jews and non-Jews alike. Earlier this year, it showcased a performance by Jewish American violinist Robert Davidovici at the Helen Bader Concert Hall on the campus of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In 2007, Ruach organized local performances by Israeli rock band Reva L'Sheva, whose members included Americans who had previously made *aliyah*, choosing to move to Israel

during adulthood.

"It's vital that we underscore the importance of Israel, not just within the Jewish community, but outside as well," said Joshua Richman, executive director of Ruach. "The energy that these performances created was tremendous."

Beyond special performances, hands-on activities comprise the core of Ruach's programming. Music lessons and arts instruction (pictured) bring artists and educators together with children, youth, and older adults. For the older adult residents of Chai Point on the east side, an artist has helped them to paint pieces that will be framed and hung in a common space.

Looking ahead, Richman seeks to increase the accessibility to its programs, not only by broadening geographically, but also by offering new arts forms to appeal to new participants. The organization is also developing a national curriculum that can help similarly-sized Jewish communities launch a culturally relevant arts program. ❖