

### Welty's Mission Statement

To provide leadership in environmental education by equitably engaging the diverse residents of the Stalene region with activities that foster an appreciation of nature and promote environmental stewardship.



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## Board President's Report—Kaelyb Lokrantz

Another year has come and gone and the Welty Center continues to broaden its impact on our Stalene community. Over the years, we have moved from Beckman Mill to a new facility at Big Hill Park, continued our annual Maple Sugar Fest, and expanded our programming. Through the leadership of our Executive Director, Brenda Plakans, we continue to extend our impact on environmental education in the Stalene region. Brenda has provided stability and growth to the Welty Center, and I look forward to continuing working with her as we move ahead.

J. Carl Welty created a legacy at Beloit College using an experiential approach to biology. We are excited to broaden that legacy with a reshaping of our staff structure. Instead of a single program director, we are very lucky to have three program managers who are bringing their own areas of expertise to our programs. Elle Schraufnagel comes to us with a degree in zoology and focuses on internships and afterschool programs. Pam Garland-Gjestson has a degree in interpersonal communication and has been coordinating field trips and events. Maddie Wendrick uses her biology degree in coordinating our camps that give kids a safe, fun, and engaging environment. We are so appreciative to have all three of them here, and we look forward to watching them continue to grow.

In a time when conservation is being challenged, it is even more important to continue to offer the services that Welty provides. We need to continue to highlight the importance of the connection between humanity and the natural world; without the conservation of the natural world around us, we will be left with nothing. Environmental education opens the door to this connection and Welty is here to continue to hold the door open.

Farmer, poet, and environmentalist Wendell Berry wrote, "Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do."

### Welty Environmental Center Staff

Brenda K. Plakans, Exec Dir; Pam Garland-Gjestson, Prog Mgr-Field Trips; Elle Schraufnagel, Prog Mgr-CTE; Maddie Wendrick, Prog Mgr-Camps; Birdia McAlister, Office Asst; Tracy White, WISE worker

### 2024 FWEC Board Members

#### **Executive Committee**

Kaelyb Lokrantz, Pres; Cindy Laube, Vice Pres; Kevin Larson, Treas; Tony Bosco, Internal Secretary; Betsy Brewer, External Secretary

#### **At-Large Directors**

Dave Bendlin, Leslie Davidson, Doug Elfstrom, Jane Fossum, Nick Geifer, Marc Kinneman, Mark Spreitzer, Lynn Vollbrecht, Harry Wiersgalla



### **Thank you to outgoing Board Officers Jane Fossum, Marc Kinneman, Leslie Davidson, and Nick Geifer**

This spring, we thanked four Board members for their service. Jane Fossum (*left*) joined in 2019, has served the longest, and was key in helping recruit some of our current executive committee (Kaelyb L., Cindy L.). Marc Kinneman served for two years, but recently joined the Illinois State Bar Assoc. and will leave the board—but not the pancake griddle, and remains a constant at Maple Sugar Fest. Leslie Davidson and Nick Geifer both joined in 2023. We welcome new Board members Tawnya Carey, Kelley Grorud, and Ron Read, who we will introduce in greater detail in the Fall *Warbler*. We appreciate our wonderful FWEC Board volunteers!



## Executive Director's Report— Brenda Plakans

2024 was a year of transformation and redesign...and Welty in 2025 is renewed and ready for action! At the beginning of 2024, we had Darien Becker capably leading the program department, and she helped hire two new Educators (Elle, Pam). The three of them

handled a busy spring and summer of field trips and camps with help from our seasonal staff, including two Beloit College interns: Helmi Kawsar and Ben Xiong. However, Darien resigned in September, to move to River Falls, WI with her family.

Instead of replacing her as program director, we reorganized the department to have three program managers who each supervise a specific area and share program delivery. We hired Maddie in the fall as the camp PM, to join Elle (Career Tech Ed), and Pam (field trips) in their new roles.

This reorganization has been transformational, and we are seeing the benefits as we sign on new school districts and partners. Each PM can focus on specifics for their area but also collaborate with each other to develop themes and activities so they are empowered and supported.

My role in all of this is to make sure they have stability and funding to support these new ideas and maintain ongoing programs. On page 4 are two pie charts showing Welty's 2024 income and expenses and how we are able to provide this stability and encourage growth. We are becoming less reliant on program income (so we can keep our fees low) by using restricted grants and gifts to cover our costs and contribute to our endowment funds. This diversity of revenue streams keeps us nimble, so the loss of any one source—while unfortunate—would not force us to make steep cuts in our staff. We are so grateful to have generous donors and supporters who have helped us reach this advantageous position.

2025 is off to a great start and I look forward to sharing more details as the year progresses!

## 2024 GRANT ROUNDUP

- \$500** Rock County Conservationists: preschool field trips
- \$1,800** Stateline Community Foundation: preschool field trips
- \$10,295** Community Devel Block Grant: teen programming
- \$10,905** National Science Foundation: GEOPATHs grant (final year)
- \$25,000** Am Rescue Plan Act: 5th grade 3-day field trips (2 yrs)
- \$35,000** Hendricks Family Foundation: C.T.E. Env. Educator (2 yrs)

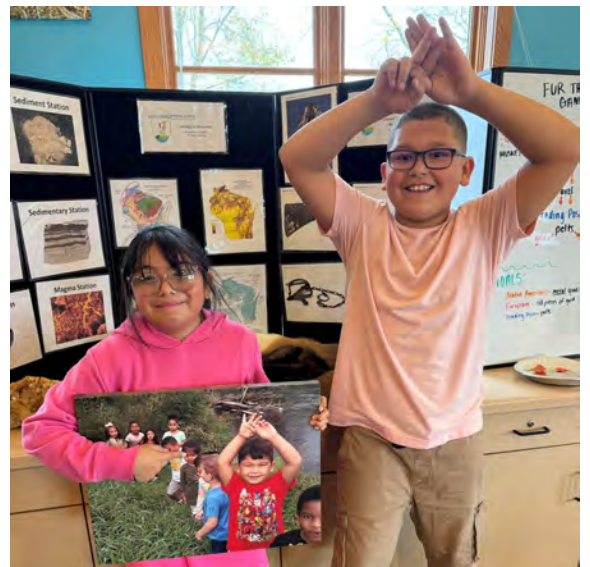


*We said good-bye to our Program Director, Darien Becker, who helped steer Welty in the first 9 months of 2024 and trained all our new Program Managers. Darien joined the staff in 2021 as an Env. Educator.*



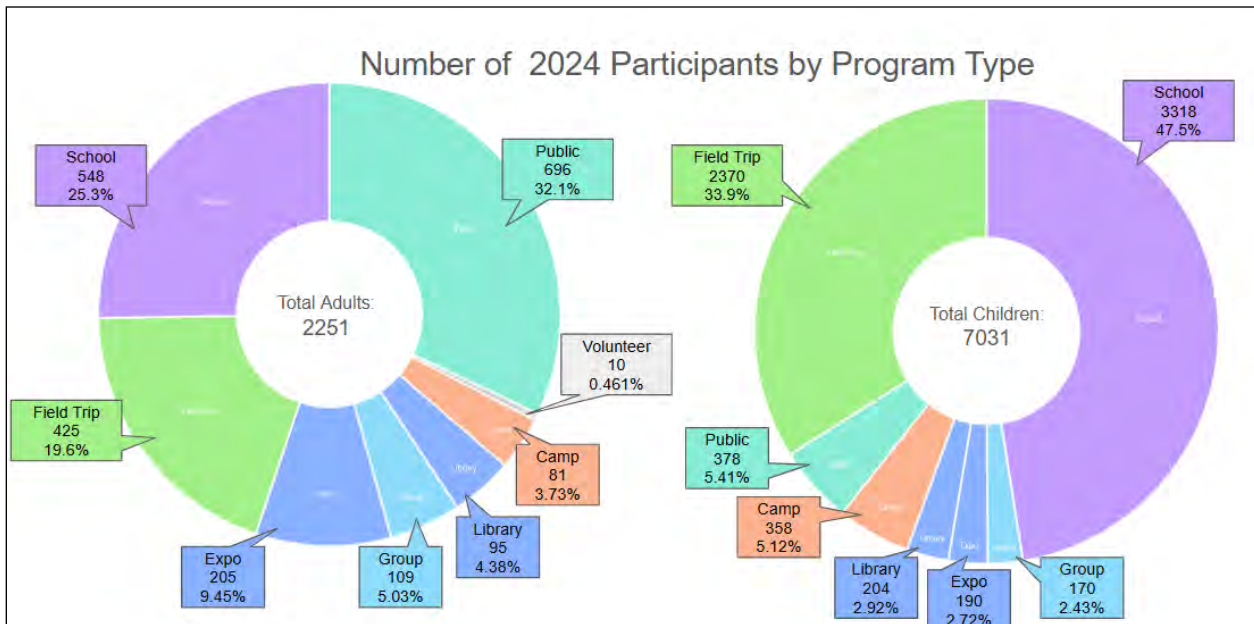
*Above: Welty hosted a Big Hill Bonfire event in October featuring a campfire sing-a-long, local apple cider and donuts, and a hot cocoa bar.*

*Below: 4th grade students on the Wisconsin history field trip recognize themselves in an Even Start preschool trip photo from 2019.*



# WELTY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT (PAGE 3)

## 2024 Program Department in photos and charts



The charts above show the 2024 breakdown of who participated in what programs by age (adult-over 18 yrs; children-under 18 yrs). 2024 totals (9,282) were lower than 2023 (10,771) due to the staff reorganization in the fall, when we avoided adding additional programs while new members were training for their positions.



Left: Merrill Elementary Eco Fair

Middle: Hendricks CareerTek after-school hydroelectricity program.

Right: Animal Architecture week at Summer Camp

### 2024 PROGRAM PARTNERS

American Geophysical Union, American Heritage Girl Scouts, Aram Public Library, Beloit Area Secular Homeschoolers, Beloit College, Beloit Public Library, Boys and Girls Club of Janesville, Brodhead Public Library, City of Beloit, City of Janesville, Clinton Community School District, Community Action Inc., Edgerton Public Library, Even Start, Fresh Start, GS Troop 7694, Hallstrom Homeschool Group, Hendricks CareerTek, Hoo's Woods, J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue, Janesville YMCA, Merrill Community Sharing Garden, Milton Consolidated School District, Monticello Public Library, National Science Foundation, Nature at the Confluence, Natural Land Institute, Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, New Glarus Public Library, Our Lady of Assumption School, PBS Wisconsin, Remake Learning Days, Rock County Beekeepers Association, Rock County Conservationists, Rock Prairie Montessori, Rock/Walworth County Head Start, Rockford Homeschoolers Hub, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Rotary Club of Beloit, School District of Beloit, School District of Janesville, Skype a Scientist, Stateline Boys and Girls Club, Sun Valley Presbyterian Church, The Lincoln Academy, Turner School District, U.S. GLOBE Office, Visit Beloit, Waterford Public Library, Wisconsin Assoc. for Environmental Education, Yellow Brick Road



Elle demonstrates holding a relaxed snake.

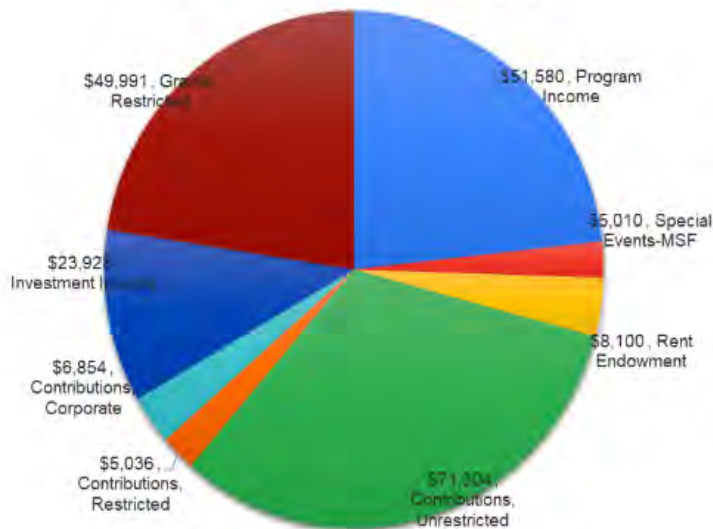
## Reflections on Year One—Elle Schraufnagel

In January 2024, I started working at Welty as an environmental educator; by September, my position switched to program manager for career and tech ed (CTE). This change has been transformational for Welty (and me)! We have redesigned our programs and camps to be more exploration-based, letting the kids direct their experience. For example, we now take part of our hikes to our shelter building area and have the kids explore and figure out their comfort level in nature. We have had SO MUCH positive feedback from this change. Adults on the trips have told us how they appreciate us giving students more time to have fun and be kids, since there is less free time in school nowadays. Some of the students have never been out in the woods before, so we let them discover what they can do and how much fun it can be, even in the short two hours we have with them.

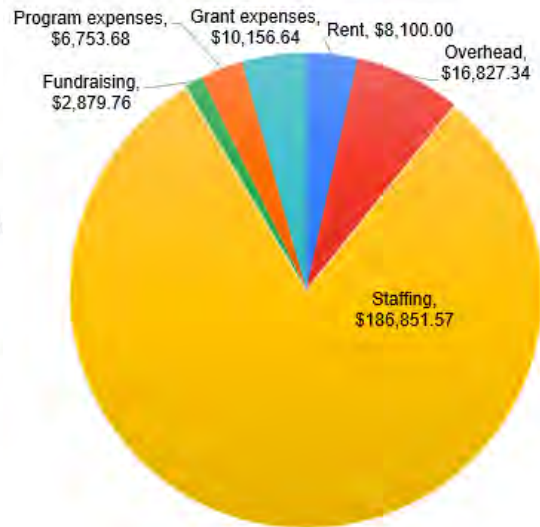
In my role as the CTE PM, I primarily work with older students. We partner with Hendricks CareerTek to teach after-school environmental engineering programs. In these programs I give background information, a problem to solve, some constraints, and let students take the rest of the time to figure out and build their design. We cover topics such as wastewater treatment, levees, biomimicry, enrichment, hydroelectricity, and more!

I am looking forward to what Welty achieves in 2025. We have already had many new groups reach out and an abundance of ideas for new programs. It has been great to work with Pam and Maddie in this development. Many of the best ideas come from chatting in our shared office space about what we find interesting and build off that. I am also looking forward to our new three-day 5th grade field trips funded by the City of Beloit (led by Pam). This will be a brand new format for us and may open up new ideas for the future. Our summer camp will also be more exploratory this year. I have watched Maddie come up with a new structure from her previous camp experiences, and I believe that this could be the best year yet! Between me, Maddie, and Pam, we are really excited to be working together to take Welty into this next era of positive perspectives and new ideas. I'm looking forward to what awaits in the future!

2024 Welty Income-\$221,805



2024 Welty Expenses- \$231,567



Welty continues to diversify its income sources and rely more on a variety of grants and less on program income. Our largest source of revenue is to be from our generous donors, who gave us a third of our annual income. These gifts allow us to pay our staff livable salaries, which is by far our largest expense (83% of the total spent). This range of income means we aren't reliant on any one source, and also means we can keep our participation fees low so Welty activities are affordable for families and schools. We ran an ordinary income deficit this year (\$10,000), which was easily surpassed by donations to our endowment funds (\$58,000—not included in the regular income above). This cushion of investment income allows us to weather most financial storms, so we can keep building Welty's capacity to serve the Stateline area with science-based nature programming. See page 5 for more financial info and budget comparisons.

# WELTY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT (PAGE 5)

## 2024 Budget v. Actual

2024 Budget (June Update)		2024 Actual
Program Income	\$ 53,460.00	\$ 51,580.00
Special Events-MSF	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 5,010.00
Rent Endowment	\$ 8,100.00	\$ 8,100.00
Contrib, Unrestricted	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 71,304.00
Contribs, Restricted	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,037.00
Contribs, Corporate	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,855.00
Investment Income	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 23,928.00
Grants, Restricted	\$ 57,200.00	\$ 49,991.00
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 246,260.00</b>	<b>\$ 221,805.00</b>
Insurance	\$3,800.00	\$ 3,593.00
Unemployment Ins	\$1,315.00	\$ 1,315.00
Investment fee	\$4,500.00	\$ 5,490.00
Office Expense	\$3,000.00	\$ 2,438.00
The Warbler Pub & Distrib	\$300.00	\$ 126.00
Membership Dues in Other Orgs	\$700.00	\$ 424.00
Special Events Expense-maple	\$1,450.00	\$ 1,133.00
Individual Fundraising Expense	\$1,500.00	\$ 1,435.00
Business Fundraising	\$200.00	\$ 78.00
Website	\$600.00	\$ 600.00
Telephone	\$1,340.00	\$ 1,527.00
Miscellaneous	\$25.00	\$ -
Rent	\$8,100.00	\$ 8,100.00
Salaries-all staff	\$174,990.00	\$ 167,373.00
Paid Presenter	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Mileage	\$2,000.00	\$ 1,652.00
Grant Expense	\$10,100.00	\$ 10,150.00
Program Supplies	\$6,590.00	\$ 5,102.00
WEC Program Advertising	\$250.00	\$ 108.00
Payroll Taxes	\$12,249.00	\$ 13,297.00
Accounting Fees	\$1,500.00	\$ 1,404.00
Legal fees	\$100.00	\$ 35.00
Professional Development	\$6,000.00	\$ 6,187.00
3x weekly cleaning	2800	\$ -
<b>Ordinary (Op) EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$243,909.00</b>	<b>\$231,567.00</b>
<b>Ordinary (Op) INCOME</b>	<b>\$246,260.00</b>	<b>\$221,805.00</b>
<b>NET Operating INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,351.00</b>	<b>\$ (9,762.00)</b>
<b>Other income and expenses</b>		
Unrealized gains		\$ 65,270.00
Endowment Donation	\$3,500.00	\$ 57,600.00
Endowment Income (int/div)	above	\$ 9,894.00
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 132,764.00</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$5,851.00</b>	<b>\$ 123,002.00</b>

## 2025 Budget (Approved 1.20.25)

2025 Budget	Expected
Program Income	\$53,000.00
Special Events-Spring	\$7,500.00
Contribution to Rent	\$8,550.00
Contributions, Unrestricted	\$85,000.00
Contributions, Restricted	\$1,000.00
Contributions, Corporate	\$7,000.00
Investment Income	\$22,400.00
Grants, Restricted	\$82,300.00
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$266,750.00</b>
Insurance	\$3,800.00
Unemployment Ins	\$3,400.00
Investment Fees	\$4,500.00
Office Expense	\$3,000.00
The Warbler Pub & Distrib	\$300.00
Membership Dues	\$700.00
Special Events Expense	\$2,500.00
Individual Fundraising	\$2,250.00
Business Fundraising	\$200.00
Website	\$600.00
Telephone	\$1,980.00
Rent	\$8,550.00
Salaries-All staff	\$164,600.00
Paid Presenter	\$600.00
Mileage	\$2,000.00
Grant Expense	\$21,500.00
Program Supplies	\$6,000.00
WEC Program Advertising	\$250.00
Payroll Taxes	\$11,522.00
Accounting Fees	\$1,500.00
Legal fees	\$100.00
3x weekly cleaning	\$4,000.00
<b>Ordinary (Operating) EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$243,852.00</b>
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$266,750.00</b>
<b>NET Operating INCOME</b>	<b>\$22,898.00</b>
<b>Other income and expenses</b>	
Endowment Donation	\$3,500.00
Endowment Income (int/div)	above
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$26,398.00</b>

2024 Year-End Balance Sheet	2024
Checking/Savings Accounts	\$ 10,495.58
RJ Rent Endowment	\$ 119,656.75
RJ General Endowment	\$ 571,636.03
RJ Money Market Account	\$ 5,338.17
Fidelity Investments	\$ 224,949.73
Investment held at SCF	\$ 45,409.76
Pre-paid insurance	\$ 2,881.52
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 980,367.54</b>

## 2024 WELTY DONORS AND GIFTS

### Donations were made in Honor of:

**Catherine Anderson**, Darrah Chavey, **Dave & Stephanie Dobson**, Dick and Shirley Newsome,  
**Dick Stenstrom**, J. Carl & Susan Welty

### Donors of \$5,000 or more

**Erik Berridge**, Kirk Berridge, **Dave & Jean Bradford**, Bob Hunter, **Will and Mary Leland**, Zeeland Farm Services

### Donors of \$1,000-\$4999

**Anonymous**, Betsy Brewer, **Jane Fossum**, Yaffa Grossman, **Nancy Johnson & Jim Van De Bogart**, Jan and Dave Knutson, **Betty Magnus**, Connie Matusiak, **Pipkin Family Foundation**, William Priewe & Elizabeth Meek, **John & Becky Wong**

### Donors of \$500-999

**Elizabeth Dunwiddie**, Educators Credit Union, **Catherine & Leo Pilachowski**, Gary & Teresa Sommers,  
**Mark Spreitzer & Philip Gorman**, Martin & Nancy Stabb

### Donors of \$250 - \$499

**Larry & Karen Arft**, Gillian & Mark Batterman, **Dave & Barb Bendlin**, Gary & Marilyn Cook, **Cornerstone Credit Union**, Neil & Kay Deupree, **Gilbank Construction**, Cindy Laube, **Philip & Victoria Melzer**, Dennis Murphy & Barb Seguin, **Dick Newsome**, Fran & Jacquelyn Patch, **Dave & Stacey Rougvie**, Jim Rougvie & Brenda Plakans, **Upal & Tracy Sengupta**, Joe & Dawn Stadelman, **Scott & Judy Tenney**, Katie & Andy Udell, **United Church of Beloit**, Dick & Kathy Vogel, **Harry & Kedron Wiersgalla**, Woodman's

### Donors of \$100 - \$249

**Norm & Carol Aulabaugh**, Tony Bosco, **Buzz & Joan Brock**, Brownfield Engineering, **Betty Jo Bussie**, Cleveland & Bette Carr, **Annabelle Collins**, Bonnie Cunningham, **Roger Dutcher**, Doug Elfstrom & Brittany Keyes, **Tom Evert & Bette Lang**, Frank Fiorina, **Marge Fizzell**, Sharon & Alan Frank, **Peter Halverson**, Oya Horoguchi, **Marty Howe**, Steve & Mary Howland, **Jeff & Susan Johnson**, Tom & Rosemary Kautz, **Pam Kindschi**, Timothy Krause & Elizabeth Babler, **Thomas & Peggy Lane**, Kevin Larson & Nicolette Meister, **Jack W. Maegli**, Kathy McNamee, **Devika Seecharran McWalters**, Christine Nelson & Fred Burwell, **Karen & Sam Niehans**, Dick & Joan Niemiec, **Richard Ott**, Barbara S. Plakans, **Lois Pollock**, Judy Robson, **Paul & Alice Roemer**, Mae Sanford, **Joan Schultz**, Senz Insurance, **Teachers Credit Union**, Randall Upton, **John Verhaar & Janet Herbert-Verhaar**, Visit Beloit, **Sandra Voie**, Lynn Vollbrecht, **Stephen & Mary Wadle**, Thomas & Anna Marie Warren, **Jim & Marianne Wilson**, WI Round Dance Leaders Council, **Michael & Polly Wolfe**, Daniel Youd & Tamara Ketabgian, **Tanya Zastrow**

### Lifetime Members

**Heidi and Richard Andre**, Erik Berridge, **Kirk Berridge**, John & EunYung Boardman, **Dave & Jean Bradford**, Betsy Brewer, **Sonja Darlington**, Neil & Kay Deupree, **Dave & Stephanie Dobson**, Tom Evert & Bette Lang, **Jane Fossum**, Pat Freeman, **Ken & Sandy Gold**, Charles F. Grose, **Yaffa Grossman**, Bill & Missy Henderson, **Bob Hunter**, Nancy Johnson & Jim Van De Bogart, **Sandra Kallas & Roger Crary**, Jan & Dave Knutson, **Kevin Larson & Nicolette Meister**, Will & Mary Leland, **Betty Magnus**, Neil McLaughlin, **Dave Mezger**, Charles & Helen Mortensen, **Dennis Murphy & Barbara Seguin**, Dick Newsome, **Karen & Sam Niehans**, Jane Noble, **Catherine & Leo Pilachowski**, William Priewe & Liz Meek, **Will Pollock**, James Rougvie & Brenda Plakans, **Carol Schwaegler**, Kevin Sofen, **Mark Spreitzer & Philip Gorman**, Gerald A. Westphal, **John & Becky Wong**

## 2024 WELTY DONORS AND GIFTS (cont'd)

### Other Gifts & Membership Renewal

**Judy Adler**, Heidi & Richard Andre, **Rick & Rita Barder**, Daniel Barolsky, **Randall & Jaime Benedict**, Nancy Boutelle, **Dawn Byrnes**, Cynthia Caldwell, **Mo & Margie Carroll**, Pierre & Pam Charles, **Jeanne Chernick-Krueger**, Kelea & Mathew Christians, **James & Karel Cripe**, George & Barbara Dilling, **Paul Dionne & Jennifer Esperanza**, Jim & Sheri Disrud, **Lance & Barbara Elfstrom**, Kathy Engel-Hunt, **Eric & Willie Ericson**, Michael & Deborah Fallon, **Lee & Marilyn Fassett**, Jim & Susan Fowler, **Susan & Naoyuki Furukawa**, John Glaberson, **Kathleen Green**, Janet & Roy Hahn, **Chris & Ann Hankins**, Mary Alice Harris, **William Heebink**, Carly Helman, **Gary & Darcy Hess**, Dorine Hoeksema, **Sheryl Horvath**, Carol Josh, **Greg & Helen Kaiser**, Ana Kelly & Rick McGrath, **Mark & Ginger King**, Paul & Kathleen Klespis-Wick, **Kristin & Andy Larson**, Rita Llorca, **Jingjing Lou**, Deborah Sapp Lynch, **Carl Mankiewicz & Carl Mendelson**, Adrienne Massel, **Birdia McAlister**, Terry & Deb McCann, **Stephan & Nicola Meyer**, Charles & Helen Mortensen, **Polly Onderak**, Dean Paynter, **Arlene J. Peterson**, Kathy Pohl, **Barbara Porter**, Mary Porter, **Kayla Poulos**, Anne Pruyne, **Aaron & Jennifer Putnam**, Ben Reeber, **Skylar Riela**, Cynthia Salvador, **Steve Schmaeng**, Gregg Schneider & Susan Adams, **Wanda Sloan**, Larry Swanson, **Pablo Toral**, Julie Uram, **Shirley von Allmen**, Pamela Wesely, **Robert & Anita Wildermuth**, Jessica Fox-Wilson & Aaron Wilson.

*\*Bold has no significance, other than to make this list easier to read*

### Remembering Welty's founder (Dick Newsome) and a long-time supporter (Darrah Chavey)

In 2024, we marked the passage of two Beloit College professors who were very important to Welty, especially in its early days. Dick Newsome (1931-2024) was a biology professor and took J. Carl Welty's position at the College. Dick was a tireless advocate for the environment and his efforts resulted in the founding of both Welty and the Rock County Conservationists. He felt it was necessary for the Stateline region to have non-profit organizations dedicated to engaging the public with environmental education (Welty), and hands-on conservation activities (RCC) to foster an appreciation of nature. Both organizations partner and thrive to this day, thanks to his vision for the region.

Darrah Chavey (1954-2024) taught Math at Beloit College, and served on the Friends of Welty board during the first two years of its existence, in 2001-2. He continued to support Welty activities, both in person and as a donor for the next 20 years. We are grateful to both men who saw value in providing people in Beloit with opportunities to connect with nature.



*Left: Dick and Shirley Newsome clown around at Welty's 2017 Maple Sugar Fest.*

*Middle: The Rock County Conservationists tend a beautiful native flower garden planted at Big Hill Center in honor of Dick Newsome.*

*Right: Darrah and Peggy Weisensel Chavey met at a square-dancing class and taught ballroom dancing every summer at Harry's Place in Beloit, as well serving as the faculty advisor at the Beloit College Ballroom Dance club.*

# WELTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



1201 Big Hill Court Beloit, WI 53511

**TO:**

----- Detach and send to FWEC 1201 Big Hill Ct. Beloit, WI 53511 -----



I want to provide support for Welty Environmental Center's operations! Welty has 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status and is solely a private, non-profit educational organization. Dues and contributions may be tax-deductible. Please accept my gift to continue these important environmental education efforts in the Stateline area.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please accept my one-time annual gift:**

- Senior/Student (\$20)     Individual (\$30)  
 Family (\$45)          Life Member (\$1000)

Additional Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Check made payable to Friends of Welty Environmental Center. Mail to: FWEC 1201 Big Hill Ct. Beloit, WI 53511

**Credit Card option available on our website:**

<https://weltycenter.org/support-us/>