

**MINNESOTA LES DAMES D'ESCOFFIER**  
**2021-2022 Annual Board Reports**

2021-2022 Board

President: Kristen Olson

Vice President: Paula Zuhlsdorf

Advisor: Cindy Jurgensen

Treasurer: Lois Tlusty

Secretary: Genie Zarling

Communications/Social Media: Lauren Voigt

Fundraising Co-chairs: Erin Clancy & Julie Hinderks

Grants: Joan Semmer

Membership: Merrilyn Tauscher

Newsletter Co-chairs: Janice Cole & Patsy Noble

Program Co-chairs: Amy Brown & Kim Ode

Scholarship: Susan Peters & Arlene Coco

Microgrants: Joan Donatelle (Committee: Liz Nerud)

Service: BJ Carpenter

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Nikki Erpelding & Cindy Jurgensen

## President Report

This was a busy year! I worked with each of the chairs, co-chairs, and committees on the board to help bring awareness to our chapter, raise funds for our philanthropy efforts and lead the board throughout the year. A few of the other things crossed off my list this year:

- Updated the MN LDEI website to include our scholarship recipients.
- Added a page to the website for the newsletter for long articles.
- Scheduled and led bi-monthly board meetings and followed up by sending the meeting minutes from our secretary.
- Attended Grant strategy meeting.
- Wrote a president's letter for each monthly newsletter.
- Worked with the fundraising committee to support the planning and execution of the fundraisers.
- I attended the virtual LDEI annual conference last fall as a voting delegate.
- I attended bi-monthly CBL meetings to build relationships with other chapter presidents.
- I worked with Tanya, our admin, and our web designer to shift the MNLDEI website to an updated web address per LDEI guidelines.

A few thoughts for next year:

- I'd love to set up a shared calendar to make sure that the board was aware of special dates, board communications, and notes about when/what we're sharing with our members and followers. It would help to clarify our communication.

## Vice President Report

Paula Zuhlsdorf

As vice president, I strove to support our President, Kristen, and the Chapter however I could through participating in board meetings and monthly events. I supported Chapter Committees whenever possible, including one for Fundraising that involved several planning and execution meetings for our various fundraising events, and another for Social, in which we debated future use of the Damelt! name and logo.

I also helped out with Service when Committee Chair BJ had to step down. I led a review of various local nonprofits as we weighed moving on from our current one, Urban Roots, but we ultimately decided to stay with UR. Its food-centered mission to help youth grow, harvest and cook their own food aligns with our values. I attended a pop-up dinner at their new building and delivered a check from our group that was this year's donation as budgeted.

I attended the virtual LDEI annual conference last fall as a voting delegate. I enjoyed hearing and learning from the various presenters, learning more about the organization and meeting delegates from other chapters.

Developing the 2022-2023 Slate of Officers has been a roller coaster. Mostly, I have felt real joy upon asking a member to take on a board position next year and hearing yes! I have truly enjoyed getting to chat with our members as a part of the board search. But there is also the reality that I haven't been able to fill all the roles. I think the pandemic has caused everyone to take stock, which means some women want to do more, some less and others are still deciding. Hopefully those deciding will decide they're ready to dive in! No matter what, I look forward to leading the group next year and getting to know our incredible members even more.

## Advisor Report

Worked with the Fundraising committee through meetings and helped in person

Submitted articles to the MN LDEI newsletter for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) and attended Zoom meetings on DEI given by LDEI

Gave advice via email and phone when approached by board members or chapter members

Revised the bylaws with two other board members

Attended Grant strategy meeting

Attended board meetings when available

Attended the Annual Conference in San Antonio

## Treasurer's Report

This report reflects MN LDEI finances **as of September 6, 2022**. A final 2021-2022 fiscal Budget and Finance Statement will be filed after September 30, 2022.

- Total Revenue
  - Income generated is \$27,637.26. This includes an anonymous \$3,000 grant for micro-grants plus \$555.00 monetary donations.
  - The budget will balance with the additional income from the final September fundraiser and remaining unpaid member dues renewals.
  
- Total Expenses
  - Expenses through September 6 are \$29,102.74. The remaining expenses may occur during September: Micro-grant, Administrative Support and final LDEI dues.
  
- 2021-2022 Fundraisers
  - Three fundraisers were held this year with income slightly lower than budgeted due to low participation.
  
- Donations
  - MN LDEI awarded a \$1,000 scholarship, \$3,500 donation to Urban Roots and \$2,255.99 in micro-grants.
  
- Assets
  - The bank balance as of September 6, 2022 is \$34,301.35.

Lois Tlusty  
2021-2022 MN LDEI Treasurer

## Secretary Report

Genie Zarling

- Attended and took notes at each of the Zoom board meetings this year.
- Provided documentation of the discussions and decisions made by the MN LDEI Board.
- Edited and resubmitted board meeting minutes as needed for approval by the board.
- Wrote and mailed notes and cards to Chapter members in need of encouragement, support or sympathy.

# Social Media & Communications Report

Lauren Voigt

## Goals:

- Multi-channel audience growth
- Increase in adding content
- Promote the chapter, its members, fundraisers, and philanthropic efforts
- Implement and utilize paid advertising budget on Facebook & Instagram

## Efforts:

- Developed a spreadsheet for tracking channel growth
  - Facebook (FB): +51 (+17.1%)
  - Instagram (IG) +148 (+25.2%)
  - Email List +256 (+65.8%)
- Added email sign-up list to LDEI websites
- Integration of Eventbrite (EB) and MailChimp (MC) so registrants on EB are automatically added to our public marketing list in MC
- Retroactively imported EB registrants and fundraiser supporters to MC
- Developed an ad budget and ran ads of FB and IG promoting:
  - Fundraisers
  - Micro-grant applications
- Compliance
  - Rebrand of Dame IT FB to “Les Dames d'Escoffier Minnesota” and handle @lesdamesmn
  - Rebrand IG handle to @lesdamesmn
  - Update website URL to lesdamesmn.org
- Regular posting on social media (average 2 weekly annually)
  - Reshare member posts / news
  - Chapter event recaps
  - Chapter fundraisers
  - Various: seasonal, community interest, industry news
- Found & followed member accounts that our account was not following (more easily through the addition of social accounts to the membership directory!)

## Considerations for 2022-2023:

- Development of a social media content calendar and including dates for key chapter activities such as:
  - MicroGrant applications
    - Recipient follow-ups when appropriate
  - Scholarship applications
    - Recipient follow-ups when appropriate

- Fundraisers
- Consider more use of video - how to generate among the chapter for use in social media
- Improving MailChimp deliverability
  - Currently sending from @gmail account. In order to improve delivery we need to switch it to sending from a domain address (ex: @lesdamesmn.org)*
- Identify the owner of LDEI's "Facebook Business" account which will allow MN LDEI to have our own ads account (2021-22 ads were run on Lauren's personal account. A Business Acct would be ideal in allowing billing directly to LDEI rather than for reimbursement, and also create a record of all ads accessible to all admins).

## Fundraising Report

Co-Chairs Erin Clancy and Julie Hinderks

The Fundraising Committee started this fiscal year thinking that we were going to be hosting a post-pandemic Dame It! event. After speaking with other members of the Chapter, we decided not to continue that path for multiple reasons:

- Some members mentioned the overall event had ran its course over the years.
- Knowing that restaurants were spread thin with labor and the loss of money during the Covid-19 pandemic, we decided that asking for a donation of time, labor, and supplies would be inappropriate at this time.
- With the continuation of Covid-19 spreading, we wanted to keep large group activities to a minimum

Additionally, we were told that members felt a bit burnt out after the number of fundraisers the prior year, so we decided to pare down to three events in 2022. We also formed a Fundraising Committee with other Dames who were willing to help plan and execute the events.

### **Holiday in a Box**

After the success of the Holiday in a Box Fundraiser last year, we decided to continue with the box. Boxes were packed and distributed at Kieran's Kitchen. We sold 166 boxes at \$85 each out of the 220 that we had for our goal and we received \$260 in donations. The boxes included MN cheeses, Patti's Roasted Nuts, Salami, Crackers, and the option for Red, White, or N/A wine. All of these items were sold to us at wholesale costs either from the Food Building or directly from the producers. Kowalski's donated the boxes and the stuffing. The net profit for this event was \$6133.72.

This event is creating a following an annual following – recommend that this event be kept on the calendar – with the following specific considerations:

- While we generate a great profit – our costs exceeded the profit.
- Purchasing items at cost from the food building is a great way to generate buzz for the food building, but costly – recommend a balance of food building/donation items.
- Due to the temporary legislation passed during COVID – we were able to have wine be a part of the product offering; this option will NOT be available for Holiday 2022, as the legislation has reverted to pre-pandemic. Recommend offering something like the ginger beer of the grilling bag with recipe – perhaps reach out to a local distillery for syrups/shrubs for beverages.
- For the grilling bag – we offered the items within a bag – vs. the box. This provided an easier option for packaging as well as a re-usable bag. Recommend this be considered for future holiday offerings. Julie will be providing Paula with leftover bags from grilling fundraiser for optional packaging for holiday in a box...

## **Grilling Box**

This box ran into some issues from the get-go. We hosted this event in conjunction with Kieran's Kitchen. They had a new staff at this time, so we need to go through a few introductory meetings to all get on the same page. This event was supposed to be help prior to Father's Day but at the last minute, it had to change. We were informed 2 days before the event went live that the hotdogs/brats would no longer be available from Red Table Meats. In order to be able to pivot, the event was held in late July.

We sold 13 small boxes at \$50 each, 20 large boxes at \$65, and collected \$330 in donations. Boxes were packed and distributed on the same day at the request of the Food Building. Their lack of storage space caused this change. The net profit was \$1400.74. Lost Capital Foods donated relish, Cindy donated chips, and Kristen donated soap. This was a huge help in raising funds! We appreciate all the donations.

We feel this event has 'legs' but missing the Father's Day window really set back the event – as it got lost in the middle of 'summer'. Recommend these vendors for future – very reliable, AWESOME tasting products. We may recommend a vegetarian box for next year.

## **Wine and Cheese Event**

This is a wine and cheese pairing class that features women-owned/woman-made German wines and women-owned/women-made/women-aged cheeses presented by Amy Waller and Erin Clancy. This class is heavily reliant on donations from creameries (Caves of Faribault, Marieke Gouda, Cowgirl Creamery, Cypress Grove, and Sartori), wineries (France 44), space (Kristen donated Quincy Street Kitchen for the evening), accompaniments (Coro Foods/Kowalski's, Patisserie 46/Julie Hinderks – grapes/fruit ). We are using wine glasses from Dame It! and the plates are placemats with the pairings listed. France 44 is also donating napkins. The total cost was \$178.65, as all the wine could not be donated. We have opened this class to 50 attendees.

Final profits were \$2,526.32. We tried to work this event in early in the month of September due to the fiscal year ending in September – working to be cognizant with our partner board members. As of 8/29/22 – we have a low participation rate – which is leading us to believe that the timing may be a bit off – and getting lost with the State Fair and Back to School. Additionally, cost may be a factor – considering that this week there is a monthly 'les dames' meeting – which costs significantly less – perhaps competing for wine tasting \$\$.

## **Things to consider for next year**

- Leaning on The Food Building for two events seemed a bit trying. With their turnover rate and lack of storage space, it may be something to reconsider for next year. I do think the Holiday in a Box would still be great to host there since it would be the 3rd year in a row if we can work with them to not pack and distribute on the same day.

- As noted above, purchasing items at cost from the food building is a great way to generate buzz for the food building, but costly – recommend a balance of food building/donation items.
- If we can plan one larger event like Dame It! or a something like the grilling event in Austin, that may be more advantageous.
- We need to work with the Events Committee to figure out which months will be in-person meetings with an associated cost so fundraisers and events do not double dip. This was a significant challenge for the fundraising events this year. I also believe we need to look at the total scope of events/fundraising – I recommend combining these committees – as I believe there are ways that the events can be small fundraisers in and of themselves and/or consider 6 events a year – vs. trying for an event each month – allowing time for fundraising events.
- We need to find a better strategy to market our fundraisers outside of the chapter members and our family, friends, and coworkers. This may be something we talk to other chapters about since each chapter has different ways to market their events.

#### **Contact List:**

- Kieran's Kitchen: Kieran (owner, [kieran@foodbuilding.com](mailto:kieran@foodbuilding.com) ), Erin (Manager, [erin@kieranskitchen.com](mailto:erin@kieranskitchen.com)), Greg (CEO, [greg@foodbuilding.com](mailto:greg@foodbuilding.com)), Casey (offsite logistics, [casey@foodbuilding.com](mailto:casey@foodbuilding.com))
- Redhead Creamery: Alise (owner, [alise@redheadcreamery.com](mailto:alise@redheadcreamery.com)), [orders@redheadcreamery.com](mailto:orders@redheadcreamery.com), [info@redheadcreamery.com](mailto:info@redheadcreamery.com).
- Caves of Faribault: Erin ( [eclancy@prairiefarms.com](mailto:eclancy@prairiefarms.com) )
- Shepherd's Way Farm: Jodi (owner, [jodi@shepherdswayfarms.com](mailto:jodi@shepherdswayfarms.com))
- Alemar: Keith (owner, [keith@alemarcheese.com](mailto:keith@alemarcheese.com)), Charlotte (cheesemaker/sales manager, [charlotte@alemarcheese.com](mailto:charlotte@alemarcheese.com) )
- Red Table Meat: Mike (owner, [contact@redtablemeatco.com](mailto:contact@redtablemeatco.com))
- Lost Capital Foods: DJ (owner, [dj@lostcapitalfoods.com](mailto:dj@lostcapitalfoods.com)), Ana (owner [ana.lostcapitalfoods@gmail.com](mailto:ana.lostcapitalfoods@gmail.com))
- Baker's Field: Wes ([wes@bakersfieldflour.com](mailto:wes@bakersfieldflour.com)), Stephen Horton ([contact@bakersfieldflour.com](mailto:contact@bakersfieldflour.com))
- R&R Cultivation: Nick (owner, [nick@rrcultivation.com](mailto:nick@rrcultivation.com))
- Ferris Family Farm: John (owner, [theferrisfarm@gmail.com](mailto:theferrisfarm@gmail.com))
- Sebesta Apothecary: Kim Sebesta (owner, Products ([sebestaapothecary.com](mailto:sebestaapothecary.com)))
- Lunds & Byerlys: Joan Donatelle ([joan.donatelle@lfhi.com](mailto:joan.donatelle@lfhi.com))
- Kowalski's: Liz Nerud ([woodburycheese@kowalskis.com](mailto:woodburycheese@kowalskis.com))
- Patti's Nuts: Patti ([pattisgranola@gmail.com](mailto:pattisgranola@gmail.com))

## Grant Report

The Minnesota chapter established a Grant Committee in 2021. This new committee has evolved over the past year and is excited to put concrete plans into action during 2022 – 2023. We began by studying the LDEI Tool Kit and watching the LDEI Digital Grant Presentation. We also networked with other Grant Committee chairs via ZOOM calls to share ideas. We submitted our first grant to The Minneapolis Foundation and participated in our first “ Give to the Max Day”.

Over the past year, we set our primary goal, brainstormed strategies, and identified possible tactics to accomplish our goal. We also identified the next steps for the coming year.

Goal: Raise money through charitable grants to support women of all ethnicities and backgrounds as they prepare for careers in the food, beverage and hospitality industries. Funding will be distributed to applicants through academic scholarships and mini-grants.

Strategies and Tactics:

1. Build awareness of MN Dames as philanthropists via PR and direct mail to prospective donors.
2. Educate foundations and corporations that we are women committed to financially supporting, nurturing, and mentoring other women preparing for careers in all segments/channels of the food, beverage, and hospitality industries.
3. Develop donor lists and create personal relationships with local Community Foundations. Invite them to participate in “Dame-it” events and possible programming.
4. Identify Minnesota corporations involved in the food, beverage and hospitality industries who provide private charitable grants. This can include companies involved with food and beverage production, product development, food marketing, retailing, restaurant companies, and much more.
5. Create promotional marketing materials that can be submitted with grant applications and used during fundraising campaigns such as “Give to the Max Day”.
6. Utilize social media to ask for funding for “Give to the Max Day”.

Activities for 2022-2023 include:

1. Develop a more compelling reason for foundations to give us money. Supplying mini-grants and scholarships may not be enough of a reason for foundations to fund us.
2. Finalize two donor lists: Community Foundations and Corporate Foundations. Identify key contacts and timing cycles for grant applications. Start developing personal relationships.
3. Create digital and printed promotional materials to build brand awareness. Look for Dames who have Public Relations experience to facilitate newspaper, magazine, and social media articles.
4. Refine materials for “Give to the Max Day”. Train Dames on how to use their social media platforms to spread the word about “Give to the Max Day”.
5. Submit at least 2-3 grant applications this year.

## Membership Report

Merrilyn Tauscher, September, 2022

We had a great group of new members join this year and I worked to help engage as many members as possible in our Chapter's activities.

We added these 10 new members and secured mentors for all. New members were welcomed and introduced at the first meeting they attended, along with receiving a gift of Kerrygold Cheeses and Butter.

| <u>Member</u>    | <u>Mentor</u>                  |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mary Scheu       | Pam Powell                     |
| Katie Milliron   | Merrilyn Tauscher              |
| Tammy Wong       | Amy Brown                      |
| Michelle Mazzara | Cindy Jurgensen                |
| Brenda Langton   | Genie Zarling                  |
| Brooke Faudree   | Andi Bidwell and Audrey Nelson |
| Alicia Hinze     | Cindy Jurgensen                |
| Ashley Housman   | Janice Cole                    |
| Laura Algieri    | Joan Donatelle                 |
| Kaarin Ottman    | Robin Asbell                   |

Six members did not renew their membership for 2021-2022. Some moved out of state and some found they could not devote the time needed to Les Dames.

Worked to engage new and newer members on committees, help with fundraisers and to attend meetings. Many of our new members stepped right up to be involved in our Chapter. Mary helped with Newsletter, Katie will be Newsletter chair next year, Brenda is on the program committee next year and Alicia is hosting a meeting at her restaurant in 2023.

Partnered with our Admin to update the Directory in October, March and July and send to our membership.

Wrote article in April newsletter with procedure for inviting a potential Dame to a meeting.

Updated all membership documents, membership position description and fine-tuned our procedure for onboarding a new member.

Tried using printed paper, peel off name tags with the Dames logo. It was decided to continue with these tags and I had 300 printed for next year. We had blank name tags for guests at meetings.

Updated the bylaws with Cindy and Lois.

End of 2021–2022-year membership was 56.

Thoughts for next year:

Add a resume, as a requirement, back to the on-line application.

Look at LDEIs new membership documents and determine what changes we might want to make, so our process more closely follows their requirements and standardized application form.

Think about sending a copy of the bylaws to new members and having them sign off that they have read them.

## Newsletter Report

Patsy Noble and Janice Cole met early in the year to toss around suggestions for improving the newsletter. We wanted to get more member input, especially with the effects of Covid still hanging around, we wanted to hear from everyone as to what they were doing and had found interesting. It resulted in the Inspired Column where 4 to 5 members each month are asked to submit ideas on what's inspiring them lately from books and podcasts to restaurants, plays, and movies they've gone to and enjoyed. It's become a favorite feature of the newsletter.

We also started a Trending column suggested and run by Julie Hinderks. Julie took the summer off as she started a new job so hopefully, she will agree to continue the column. We also were able to get a new member, Mary Scheu, involved in the newsletter by asking her to interview a Dame in our group for member spotlight, and later in the year, Mary agreed to take over Inspired from Janice to free Janice up to work on newsletter layout as Patsy had to step down due to other commitments.

Janice Cole

## Programs Report

> Our 2021-22 programs evolved over the year as COVID concerns continued to lurk. But we managed!

> Here's a roundup of the year's schedule:

> October 28: We kicked off the year with a Q&A session with Rick Nelson, recently retired restaurant critic for the Star Tribune. He provided a delightful glimpse into the Twin Cities dining scene over the decades. Jeannie Kozar obtained the community room at her condo for a cozy gathering spot. Kim Ode provided rice bowls and Amy Brown baked pies for dessert. For a note toward history, COVID vaccinations were necessary to attend and masks were worn except when dining.

> November 13: Responding to member requests for alternate meeting times, we hosted a Saturday morning session via Zoom in an initiative to improve members' social media savvy. Lauren Voigt and Robin Asbell shared their experiences and tips in creating and promoting successful online presentations.

> December 9: Joan Semmer opened her lovely home for our annual holiday party. As always, it's a potluck event, but as a gift to all, we collected each recipe and assembled an online cookbook. Big thanks to LDEI Admin Tanya Hamilton for taking the draft document to a more polished level as she sought to improve her own skills in this area.

> January 7: A group of Dames spent a volunteer shift at Open Arms in Minneapolis, packing meals for those who need in-home delivery of healthy, healing meals. In retrospect, this was more of a service event than a traditional meeting. Also, participation was limited to Open Arms policies for groups. Those who attended had a fulfilling afternoon, but we should consider more inclusive and educational ideas for the future.

> February 7: A resurgence in COVID numbers led to a quick pivot to an online ZOOM session, which became round two of social media training. In an open session, Dames shared what has worked and what hasn't in terms of promoting their work, with an eye towards improving how we promote our big fundraisers throughout the year.

> March 10: We explored a new frontier, cooperating with our sister chapter in St. Louis to create a Table Talk on Rice, part of International's month-long initiative to provide all members with the

opportunity to Zoom in to presentations over a range of topics. Minneapolis chefs Beth Dooley and Tammy Wong were our contribution to the speaker roster, with Beth sharing her expertise on wild rice and Tammy talking about rice's role in Chinese cuisine. Tammy also chose to become a member of our chapter.

> April 27: Members gathered for a lunchtime tour of Malcolm Yards, the new food bazaar in the midway area of St. Paul. After a presentation about how the project began and visiting with various vendors, everyone bought their own lunch and dined communally for a delicious and diverse meal.

> May 12: Cindy Jurgensen opened her home for a presentation by member cheesemongers Liz Nerud and Erin Clancy, "All about Cheese and Pairings Happy Hour." Various members contributed appetizers and desserts that bookended a terrific journey through various wines and how they are best enjoyed with particular cheeses and accompaniments. It was great to experience the expertise within our group.

> June 9: Our premier white tablecloth event of the year was "An Evening with Brenda Langton" at the University of Minnesota's Campus Club (thanks to Kathleen Craig for the venue connection.) Chef Beth Jones created a buffet meal of some of Brenda's well-known recipes, and Brenda shared her story from opening a hippie vegetarian restaurant at a teenager to becoming one of the Twin Cities' iconic chefs with Cafe Brenda and Spoonriver. It was a memorable evening. Brenda also has since become a member.

> July 28 - Members enjoyed a midday meeting touring the Hmong Market in St. Paul and heard how this destination for Asian food and ingredients was founded and has flourished over the years. Afterwards, everyone bought their own lunch from various vendors.

> August 30: Laurie McCann Crowell, owner of the Golden Fig gourmet food store in St. Paul, told us how she became a highly successful creator and purveyor of salts, seasonings, sauces and more. From first working for Barefoot Contessa Ina Garten to welcoming President Barack Obama into her shop, her journey is a testament to "laying the groundwork," as she said, and to being fortunate to work at something she loves. Kim Ode hosted the event in her home, with food from her wood-fired oven and dessert contributions from several members.

> September 28: We will meet at St. Paul Brewing for the annual meeting. We'll also hear the experiences of Barb Schaller, whose canning has earned dozens of ribbons at the Minnesota State Fair.

## Scholarship Report

Dear fellow Dames,

This year we received 1 application for our scholarship from a young woman representing a

institution of higher education: University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Normally our scholarship winners are invited to one of our meetings so we can all meet them. This year, we will extend the invitation to Mary to attend a program where we can meet

her if she is in town.

Your Scholarship Committee,

Arlene Coco, Allison Sheardy, Dorothy Stainbrook, Jessica Becker and Lizbeth Kliewer

Meet our 2022 LDEI MN Scholar:

Mary Zimmer, \$1,000 Scholarship

Age 18, from Medina, attended Wayzata High School. High School GPA 3.9

Mary wrote: I wish to express my gratitude as a recipient of the LDEI Scholarship for Culinary Education. Thank you so much for the scholarship I am honored.

Here is Mary's Essay that shows her passion for scarcity and environmental justice.

Should I buy the chocolate milk from Fairlife® (nope), or the local dairy farm 10 miles away from our co-op? These small changes are my compass. Through my involvement in my school's Compass Ecology of Food and AP Environmental, my love for the natural world and a desire to help the health of our planet has strongly emerged. I want to learn about and initiate change in food manufacturing and distribution systems. Many current issues surrounding current practices are scary and urgently need my generation's minds to help solve them. I have worked for a local restaurant for two years, in our community garden, and for the Minnesota Agricultural in the classroom, and I have seen upfront the waste and needs for education for our current world inhabitants.

I desire to find solutions to current environmental issues surrounding food production. I will focus on sustainable agriculture and its environmental impacts through a B.S. in Agronomy. I also plan to earn an Organic Certificate. I see my degree from UW Madison

or U of Iowa as being a perfect springboard into graduate studies in the ecology of food and sustainability

I plan to become a changemaker to help research and address current issues around food scarcity and environmental justice through hands-on service-learning projects in my college's town and to include an experiential learning opportunity in sustainable development abroad. I want to see how other countries have tackled environmental challenges. I would love to study in Copenhagen, Denmark through the Danish Institute for Study Abroad and see firsthand how the Danish has become a leader in environmental sustainability

Recently, I organized an event called *Food for Everyone*, where we served over 350 people a meal all from rescued sources. We also had six pallets of food from our local food shelf on hand that was about to expire and allow families to take the food home to use. I had a booth on Agricultural Practices and learning opportunities for Minnesota elementary school children to learn about where their food comes from!

My grandmother, a Midwest farmer, has been a huge inspiration to me. Her repeated stories of Southern Minnesota and Iowa farm life; her days filled with chores, canning, and growing food, were a staple of my childhood. The backdrop of her life seemed magical, its image sketched in my mind.

Food production and the social and economic issues surrounding it are not new. However, today the consideration for the environmental impact for food growing and distribution practices are different and evermore critical than in the twentieth century. The food

system over the last fifty years has become highly complex, compared to my grandparent's farming from 1920 to 1970. I have dug and continue to sift through its complexities.

As grandma lives her eighty-eighth year in 2021, she talks more and more about the fruit trees and gardens of her childhood, in her retreat back to those times due to advanced dementia. As I listen, from a chair in her memory care apartment, I see my future vision more clearly. I desire to be a part of the development of new solutions that assure that we can all eat nutritiously and not further damage our planet. It may take going back to more organic practices, like those of my grandparents. I believe in my heart we can change the U.S. food system to one that supports equality amongst our citizens in tandem with the sustainability of our shared environment.

Her references reflected her dedication to excellence.

Hailee Peck, Mathematics teacher from Wayzata High School-

“Besides academics and understanding, the quality that stood out most about Mary is her ambition. She is very self-motivated and willing to advocate for her own success as well as for the success of her peers.”

Jennifer Landy, Counselor from Wayzata High School-

“Mary is agile and adapts well to change. When she makes a mistake, Mary owns it (sometimes with appropriate humor), and is not afraid to retry, Mary is a gift to any learning environment. She cares to do well, and she cares to see others at their best. When a peer experiences success, Mary's joy for them is noted in her smile and excitement. Mary shared with me once, “I love making people feel welcome and accepted while working together.” She truly is the ultimate team member and will be a wonderful addition to whichever college she chooses to attend.”

## Microgrant Report

This was an exciting year for microgrants. A one time spring promotion and application time was established. The time frame seemed to be very effective. We promoted this with social media, our newsletter and encouraged members to share. We received 12 applications. Our original budget for microgrants was \$1500.00. An anonymous member also contributed \$3,000.00. Bringing the total to \$4,500.00.

Ten microgrants were awarded. The maximum amount awarded is \$500.00. The grants were used for a variety of needs.

Six of the microgrant recipients have sent in the necessary documentation, receipts and photos and have received their grants.

Sarina Garibovic, Wine Education equipment, glassware

Rachel Anderson, Vikings and Goddesses, Farmers Market, display and transportation equipment.

Sarah Ashenbrenner, WSET Level 3 Wine Education tuition

Nicole Dietman, Buffalo Rock Winery, Patio Furniture

Ashley Boeshans, Mr. Chippy, Signage

Celine Jennings, Production costs for LGBT Bars Documentary

For a total of \$2,755.99.

Two Microgrants have been transferred to the next fiscal year.

Belen Rodriguez - Quebracho Empanadas. New semi automatic empanada maker.

Jennifer Magner- Miss Jenny's Hot Sauce, business licenses and fees.

\$1,000.00 from this year will be added to next year's budget for these two recipients.

Two recipients have not sent in any necessary documentation or responded to emails. They can reapply next year if they like. Their microgrants totaling \$898.00 will also go back into the budget for next year.

Two applicants were declined due to funds not available.

With the higher number of applicants, it was necessary to establish an improved Standard Operating Procedure. A spreadsheet and a workflow list was created for keeping track of all incoming and outgoing communications. A folder was established and shared to provide ease for social media content and sharing. We found that it is necessary to make a clear deadline date for receiving necessary paperwork and dispensing the grants.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joan Donatelle, Microgrants Chairperson  
Liz Nehrud, committee member