



# Madison

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

November 22, 2021

[madisongives.org](https://madisongives.org)

## Celebrating Philanthropy and Those Making a Difference



What sets a community foundation apart from other types of philanthropy is the community of fundholders and donors who have chosen to give to and through it. On November 11, AFP Greater Madison held its 34th Annual National Philanthropy Day celebration. At the event, many members of Madison Community Foundation's (MCF's) community of fundholders were honored for the work they do. We're especially proud to celebrate the recognition of former MCF Executive Director Jane Coleman, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Brenda Baker and Bird Ross, who were honored as Outstanding Grassroots Fundraisers.

### **A Life-Long Commitment to Philanthropy in Madison**

Jane Coleman was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing her long commitment to the Madison area and encouraging philanthropy here. When Coleman took the helm at MCF, she was faced with a choice between spending out MCF's existing \$400,000 or helping it grow. She chose "grow," and today MCF is an enduring organization with \$40 million in assets. You can read more her contributions to philanthropy on the next page.

### **Bird Ross and Brenda Baker: Creating the Women Artists Forward Fund**

As novice fundraisers, Ross and Baker combined their love of art and desire to support women artists into a campaign to build a major arts endowment that will support emerging and established artists for decades to come. Their efforts were recognized by AFP Greater Madison with the 2021 Outstanding Grassroots Fundraisers Award, nominated by Madison Community Foundation. You can find the story of the Women Artists Forward Fund on page 3.

**Make a gift today, and have an  
impact on the future**

**DISCOVER HOW**

## Jane Coleman: Laying a Transformational Foundation

When Jane Coleman became Executive Director at MCF she faced a choice: spend out the organization's existing \$400,000 or raise \$1 million to reinforce MCF's mission. Luckily, she chose the latter. By the time she retired, Coleman had seen the organization grow to \$40 million in assets. In doing so, she created an enduring institution dedicated to enhancing the common good through philanthropy.



Some of Coleman's accomplishments include:

- **Stewarding a Game-Changing Gift.** In 1991, businesswoman and philanthropist Marie Graber left MCF a \$15 million unrestricted bequest, the largest gift in MCF history. Coleman led the board of governors to designate the entire, unrestricted gift to endow the Community Impact Fund, establishing one of the area's largest community grantmaking programs as a permanent resource that completely changed the way MCF worked in the community.
- **Spearheading the lead grant for the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center.** Shortly after the Community Impact Fund was established, the Monona Terrace project was revived and approved as a way, in part, to revitalize downtown Madison. Coleman led MCF in making a \$1 million lead grant, helping provide momentum behind the project.
- **Challenging a Group of Women to Start a Fund.** In 1993, feeling that mainstream charities and foundations were falling short when it came to programs that benefited women and girls, Coleman galvanized 100 women to each donate \$1,000 to a fledgling fund. This fund – A Fund for Women – has grown to \$3 million and supports a wide variety of area nonprofits focusing on economic security for women and girls.
- **Helping Lead the Great Performance Fund Campaign.** In 2004, given five years and a \$23 million challenge grant from Pleasant Rowland, Coleman and co-chair Kathleen Woit were able to secure \$23 million in pledges within just two years, creating a \$46 million endowment to provide permanent funds for every resident company of the Overture Center for the Arts. These funds have allowed multiple arts organizations to thrive and built capacity and sustainability for the area's premier arts facility.

Since her "retirement," Coleman has continued to serve the community as a mentor and volunteer. At Simpson Street Free Press, Coleman works one-on-one with student reporters to polish articles about science, history and books, helping young people prepare articles for publication. Coleman served as a volunteer leader of MCF's 75th anniversary Legacy Campaign, welcoming 101 new individuals and couples who have pledged to leave a permanent legacy through an estate gift to MCF.

When two local artists, Brenda Baker and Bird Ross, began what they envisioned as a \$100,000 endowment to support local women artists, Coleman mentored the two novice fundraisers. Their campaign eventually raised more than \$500,000 for the Women Artists Forward Fund.

Our community is fortunate to have people like Coleman who give so generously of themselves to help others.



### December 30 Is the Last Day to Give This Year

The deadline for making gifts for the 2021 tax year comes earlier this year: all gifts must be received at MCF or postmarked by December 30.

Why the change? The Post Office, banks and many businesses will be closed on December 31 in observance of New Year holiday.

You can find the complete list of deadlines on our website at [www.madisongives.org/2021deadlines](http://www.madisongives.org/2021deadlines)

## The Women Artists Forward Fund

### Providing Valuable Support for Women Artists in Dane County

In 2018, as part of the centennial celebration for the Wisconsin Capitol building, Madison Community Foundation sponsored an exhibition by local artists inspired by the imagery and history of this iconic building. Two of the artists, Brenda Baker and Bird Ross, created a social practice piece, *Being Forward*, based on the Miss Forward Sculpture that sits in front of the building and faces State Street.

With *Being Forward*, Baker and Ross decided to embark on a project that would gather photographs of local women, clad in a gown and holding something important to them, to mimic the stance of the sculpture. This series, now more than 200 women strong, was exhibited around Madison in conjunction with the state capital's 100th anniversary.

#### A Fund Is Born

*Being Forward* is more than an art project – it is a social practice piece that calls attention to gender inequities in the arts, explores the history and contemporary practice of women's philanthropy in the visual arts, and works to solve underlying inequities in the regional arts community.

Both Baker and Ross have received prestigious international, national and local grants to support their individual practices, which significantly advanced and buoyed their careers. This meaningful funding has largely disappeared, however. So, as part of their project, Baker and Ross wanted to create opportunities to recognize, support and honor women artists and their contributions to our community.

To do this, Baker and Ross – neither of whom had done fundraising before – set out to raise \$100,000 as a permanent endowment that would provide ongoing support to Dane County women artists. They gathered a group of local art enthusiasts and began raising funds.

The campaign goal doubled, then tripled. Eventually, they raised more than \$500,000 for the Women Artists Forward Fund. The fund's mission is to address gender disparity issues facing women artists by providing them with financial resources to strengthen their work, along with recognition and community support to leverage their creative capital.

#### Paying it Forward

The Women Artists Forward Fund, which is held at Madison Community Foundation, is one of the top three funds for women artists in the nation in terms of dollars awarded annually. It provides support to talented women visual artists in Dane County through two annual, unrestricted Forward Art Prizes of \$10,000 each.

The Forward Art Prizes provide important opportunities for women artists and give them broader recognition of their work, which contributes to a thriving, inclusive arts community for us all to enjoy.

If you would like to support the Women Artists Forward Fund, you can make a gift [here](#).



Could a donor advised fund help you meet your goals?

LEARN MORE



By Alison Helland, Director of Donor & Advisor Engagement

It is hard to believe, but 2021 is quickly drawing to a close! At this time of year, many people start thinking about the types of charitable gifts they would like to make before year-end.

As you prepare for your year-end giving, here are 10 things to remember:

**1. Your advisor is a critical part of your year-end giving process.** Before making any type of substantive year-end charitable gift, consult with your tax advisor. They can help you determine how your proposed gift might affect your estimated tax liability and your existing estate plan.

**2. Certain charitable giving deductions have been extended into 2021.**

- Taxpayers taking the standard deduction may claim an additional charitable deduction of up to \$300 for individuals and \$600 for married taxpayers filing jointly for cash gifts to qualified charities. (Note, however, that gifts to donor advised funds are ineligible for this additional deduction.)
- Taxpayers itemizing their deductions may be able to deduct cash contributions equal to up to 100% of their adjusted gross income (AGI). (Deductions for certain gifts, such as appreciated securities held for more than 12 months, continue to be limited to 30% of AGI.)

**3. Qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from your individual retirement account (IRA) are still tax-free.**

Anyone who is 70 1/2 or older can transfer up to \$100,000 from their IRA directly to a qualified charity. (A donor advised fund does not qualify to receive QCDs). A QCD is not taxed and reduces the balance of your retirement account (on which you and your heirs will ultimately pay tax). Your QCD can be sent directly from your IRA to your favorite nonprofit. It also can be used to establish or add to



## A Playground for All at McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg

No one deserves to be left out. With the new Playground for All under construction at McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg, no one will miss out on playground fun. People of all ages and abilities can enjoy this inclusive playground. The project is being spearheaded by the Fitchburg Optimists Club, and is an example of the club's mission to "Bring out the best in kids and community."

### What's Different About a "Playground for All"?

To create an inclusive playground, designers consider the needs of children and adults with a vast range of abilities. The new playground being built for Fitchburg's McKee Park makes use of leading-edge design and materials to provide universal access to a sensory-rich environment.

In a traditional playground, those who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids can find paths too narrow or surfaces too soft to accommodate their devices. Someone with low vision can find it hard to see and use playground equipment. Even a child with no physical difficulty accessing play structures may struggle with overstimulating environments.

Examples of inclusive design include:

- Wide paths and solid surfaces that make equipment accessible for all.
- Steps and risers that use alternating colors for better visibility.
- Quiet areas providing space for social interaction where those with sensory processing disorders feel comfortable.

True accessibility means parents with disabilities themselves are able to use the playground as well, to assist their children. An inclusive playground truly works for all.

Fitchburg's Playground for All will include swings and teeter-totters that accommodate wheelchairs. Bathrooms,



## 10 Things to Remember, continued

an endowment fund designated to benefit the organization of your choice, or to support one or more of MCF's funds, which target grantmaking throughout Dane County.

**4. Giving appreciated securities may provide an increased tax deduction.** If you have stocks or other securities that are worth more than you paid for them, and you've owned them for a least 12 months, consider giving those to charity. Doing so may allow you to avoid capital gains tax and take a charitable deduction for the securities' full fair market value. Your deduction for donation of appreciated stock or securities is limited to 30% of your AGI each year, but you can carry over any excess deductions for up to five additional years.

**NOTE:** Since gifts of appreciated securities can take some time to process, you will want to coordinate with the recipient of your donated securities as soon as possible to ensure that transfer of these securities can be completed by year end.

**5. Giving appreciated real estate may also provide an increased tax deduction.** Giving appreciated real estate to charity can provide a tax benefit similar to a transfer of appreciated stocks or other securities. However, like stock gifts, real estate transfers can take some time to complete, so planning ahead is important.

**NOTE:** If you are interested in making a gift of real estate to charity, you should coordinate with the recipient organization as soon as possible to confirm it will accept the property, and to complete the process necessary to transfer the property by year-end.

**6. "Bunching" your giving to maximize the benefit of your itemized deductions may result in greater tax savings.** The standard deductions for 2021 are \$12,550 for individuals and married taxpayers filing separately, \$18,800 for heads of household, and \$25,100 for married individuals filing jointly. Because these standard deduction amounts are relatively high, you may want to ask your advisor if bunching your charitable giving into the years you itemize your deductions would reduce your overall tax liability.

You can find more information on how the timing of your gifts may affect your overall tax liability [here on our blog](#).

**7. Take time to learn about the organizations working in areas you'd like to support.** If you have an area of interest rather than a specific organization you'd like to support, MCF's [Greater Madison Nonprofit Directory](#) can help. It provides a comprehensive online guide to charitable organizations in our region. You can sort broadly by area of interest, organization size or location. You also can use it to learn more about a specific organization's financial health, programs, operations and impact.

**8. If you want to retain flexibility in the causes you support, consider establishing a donor-advised fund.** If you are planning for a charitable tax deduction this year and want to retain the flexibility to distribute gifts to charities later or over multiple years, consider establishing a donor-advised fund. You can find out more about establishing a donor-advised fund with MCF [here](#).

**9. If you need any information, or have any questions, about the options available for giving at MCF, contact us!** Working with a philanthropic advisor at MCF gives you access to our knowledge of the local nonprofit community and opportunities to make a difference in ways that matter to you. We can also help you and your advisor think strategically about the tools you can use to make gifts during your lifetime or through your estate.

**10. Be aware of the year-end giving deadlines.** Last on our list, but certainly not least important - if you do choose to make a gift before year-end, timing is important. Because January 1st falls on a Saturday this year, the New Year's holiday will be recognized on December 31. This means post offices and banks will be closed that day. **Mailed gifts must be postmarked by December 30**, and any gifts made by credit card must appear on your credit card statement prior to December 31.

To allow time to process the transactions, MCF recommends that transfers of stock and securities be completed no later than December 7. And distribution requests from existing MCF funds must be made no later than December 15. You can find the complete list of year-end giving deadlines on our website at [www.madisongives.org/2021deadlines](http://www.madisongives.org/2021deadlines).



## Playground for All, continued from page 4

picnic tables, ramps and paths have been designed for accessibility. Even the ground surface plays into the inclusivity.

“The poured-in-place surface is a really cool feature,” enthused Jake Johnson, Optimist in charge of fundraising for the project. “The squishy rubber surface is injury-preventing, but it also uses color to visually signal zones around each play structure. A kid running will see that and know to pay attention.” A sensory-friendly neutral color scheme with bright accents has been chosen instead of the bright colors so often used to appeal to children.

### Partner Groups Provided Valuable Expertise

“The playground has been what I call a magnet project,” said Johnson. “When you have a good project, a dream team forms around it.”

The Optimists benefitted from the expertise of several partners – their dream team – on this project. Input from UW Health’s Safe Kids program was instrumental in making sure that the playground design incorporated features that would keep children safe while playing. CI Therapies – a pediatric therapy center in Fitchburg – helped spearhead the effort to bring the playground to McKee Park and lent their expertise that comes from providing therapy to kids with a range of abilities, helping select the playground equipment and design that would provide benefits. CI Therapies also was a significant fundraising partner for the project, which also will provide them with an outdoor location for therapy sessions when the weather is nice.

When it came time to raise money for the new project, he turned to Madison Community Foundation (MCF). “It seems so obvious to partner with experts who are used to working with organizations like ours to raise money and do good in our community,” Johnson said. To help ensure the playground remains well-maintained and accessible for all in perpetuity, the Fitchburg Optimist Club has established an endowment fund with the Madison Community Foundation.

MCF’s expertise helped in other ways too. Tom Linfield, Vice President of Community Impact, directed the Fitchburg Optimist Club toward grants available from other funders whose grantmaking focus was appropriate for the project. “And we got those grants,” Johnson said.

### Expecting a Grand Opening – and Lots of Use

The Playground for All will be located next to the McKee Park Splash Pad. Although the project has been affected by the supply chain issues brought about by the pandemic, ground has broken on the project, and when the new inclusive playground opens, Johnson predicts it will see lots of use.

“There are people with disabilities who have never played on a playground in their life. It took a long time for the world to get to this point,” Johnson said. “Parks help families and communities connect. Let’s build a playground where we have something for everyone.”

## Fitchburg Optimist Club: Bringing Out the Best

Like many service clubs, The Fitchburg Optimist Club finds people often don't understand its mission. The Optimist movement began in the early 20th century to address societal problems, choosing their name to reflect their positive outlook. Today, Optimist International is a worldwide volunteer organization dedicated to helping children develop to their full potential. The Fitchburg Optimist Club focuses on building and supporting amenities for kids in local parks and schools, sponsoring events and scholarships, and creating opportunities for kids while building relationships within the community.

While construction continues, the Fitchburg Optimist Club’s [GoFundMe campaign](#) remains active.

Donations can also be made to [provide ongoing support to the playground](#) through the endowment fund.

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

NOV

25-26

### MCF Office Closed

MCF offices will be closed in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

DEC

15

### Last Day to Submit Grant Recommendations

This is the last day to submit a grant recommendation from your fund for 2021. Checks will be mailed the last week of December, following approval by the MCF Board.

DEC

24

### MCF Office Closed

The MCF office will be closed in observance of the Christmas holiday. We wish holiday cheer to all who celebrate.

DEC

30

### Donation Deadline for 2021

Because the Post Office and most banks will be closed on December 31 in observance of the New Year's holiday, gifts must be postmarked by today. MCF will remain open on December 31 to assist with any year-end needs.

## Last Word

As the community's foundation, MCF works to help community members achieve their philanthropic goals, allowing them to tap into MCF's expertise in charitable giving, deep knowledge of the community, and commitment to permanent, sustainable philanthropy.

Have an idea for a story? Have exciting news you'd like to share?  
Join the conversation.



[View Our Website](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Email Preferences](#)

## Madison Community Foundation

111 N. Fairchild Street, Suite 260, Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: 608-232-1763 | Email: [frontdesk@madisongives.org](mailto:frontdesk@madisongives.org)