



FM Area Foundation

Connecting people and purpose.

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February Newsletter 2021

Get to Know Eric Wilkie

FM Area Foundation Executive Director, Eric Wilkie, is featured in this month's *Fargo INC!* magazine as part of the Faces of Fargo Business.



An excerpt from *Fargo INC!*

Wilkie has been working in nonprofits for 20 years. Half of those years have been spent in the trenches of the nonprofit world, helping to directly impact the lives of those served by the organization. The other half has been spent working in philanthropy; helping donors identify their passions and aligning those passions with an organization for greater impact.

"My current role aligns well with what I've been doing in the last 10 years except now I get to focus on helping more donors to impact a variety of charities with their financial support," said Wilkie.

[Read more about Eric in Fargo INC!](#)

Spirit of the Sandbagger Public Art Project

The FM Area Foundation is serving as fiscal sponsor to the Spirit of the Sandbagger Public Art Project.

The Fargo Lions Club is commemorating its 100-year anniversary. To celebrate, the club is facilitating a public art project to be funded by the community and then donated to the City of Fargo. This project will honor the spirit, determination and cooperation of all who volunteered to protect the community from historic flooding in 1997 and 2009 by filling and laying sandbags. The project is called "Spirit of the Sandbagger." During these floods, city leaders organized efforts to have sandbags filled and delivered to threatened homeowners and businesses. Many volunteers answered the call to help protect their neighbors. The "Spirit of the Sandbagger" was one

of tenacity, resilience and hope.

To honor that spirit, the Fargo Lions Club, with support from the City of Fargo, is working to develop a lasting structure to be placed at Riverside Gardens near the bridge on 1st Avenue North and 2nd Street in downtown Fargo. The piece of public art will provide a reminder of those difficult and triumphant times.

[Read More.](#)



A rendering of the "Spirit of the Sandbagger" public art project facilitated by the Fargo Lions Club. This unique public art piece honors the community's flood fighters through the years. It will be installed in Riverside Gardens along the Red River in downtown Fargo.

[Give to the Spirit of the Sandbagger Public Art Project Fund](#)

Coffee for Healthcare Heroes Fund Continues to Bring Joy Across the Metro



The FM Area Foundation and the Offutt Family Foundation recently created the [Coffee for Healthcare Heroes Fund](#) to show support and appreciation for the important work being done by local healthcare workers.

To date, 8,000 gift cards have been distributed to employees at Sanford, Essentia, the Fargo VA, and most recently to Fargo Cass Public Health and Clay County Public Health.

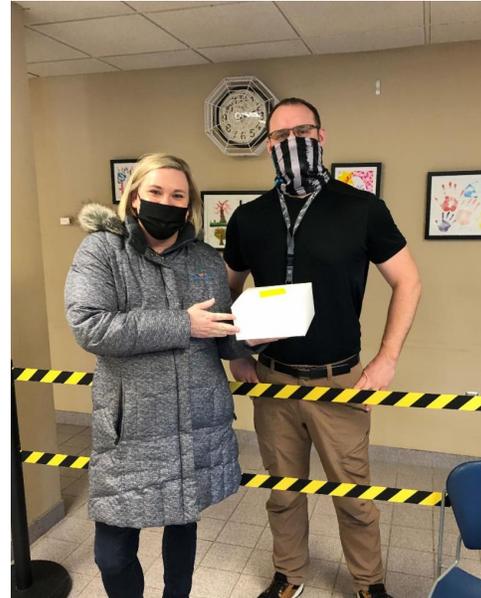
"Public health officials have been working extremely hard this past year to help keep our region safe. We thank them for their ongoing work and coordinating vaccine distribution across our region," said Lexi Oestreich, Program Director.

Thank you to our corporate sponsors:

Offutt Family Foundation, RDO Equipment, and Microsoft TechSpark



Thank you, Fargo Cass Public Health!



Thank you, Clay County Public Health!

8,000 Coffee Gift Cards Given to Local Healthcare Workers!

6 New Funds: To Benefit Charitable Causes

The FM Area Foundation manages more than 400 charitable, component funds created by generous donors. Some have very specific purposes. Others provide resources to address our community's greatest needs. Recent funds created include:

- 1938 Fund
- Cass County Area Retired Teachers Association Scholarship Fund
- Cheryl L. Larson Scholarship Fund
- Hammerstrom Family Donor Advised Fund
- Jane and Stephen Nelson Family Fund
- Northern Plains Philanthropy Fund

For information on setting up a charitable fund to support the causes you care about or to give to an existing fund, contact Greg Diehl, Director of Gift

Planning and Donor Services, at greg@areafoundation.org or call 701.234.0756.

To view a list of all the charitable funds we manage, [visit our website](#).

Matt Leiseth Joins Board of Directors

The FM Area Foundation is pleased to announce Matt Leiseth has joined its Board of Directors.

Leiseth is President of Hornbacher's, with stores located in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo. Leiseth's career began at Hornbacher's in 1991 as a bagger and continued with positions of increasing responsibility. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Concordia College and a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Mary.



Leiseth is an active leader in the Fargo-Moorhead community. He currently serves on the United Way of Cass Clay Board of Directors, the Village Family Service Center Foundation, Downtown Moorhead Inc., in addition to being an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead. Leiseth and his wife, Janelle, live in Moorhead with their four children.

"We are excited to have Matt join our Board of Directors. Matt's experiences, knowledge, leadership and desire to make our community better, aligns with our priorities here at the FM Area Foundation. We welcome Matt and are excited for his help in growing our impact in the region," said Eric Wilkie, Executive Director.

Thank you to retiring board member, Morrie Lanning



Morrie Lanning gave generously of his time contributing to the the growth and success of the FM Area Foundation. He served on the Board of Directors from 2013-2020, serving as Chair and Vice Chair and participating in several committees.

We'd like to express our appreciation and gratitude for Morrie Lanning's distinguished service.

See what's happening on our social sites!



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Thank you for your support!