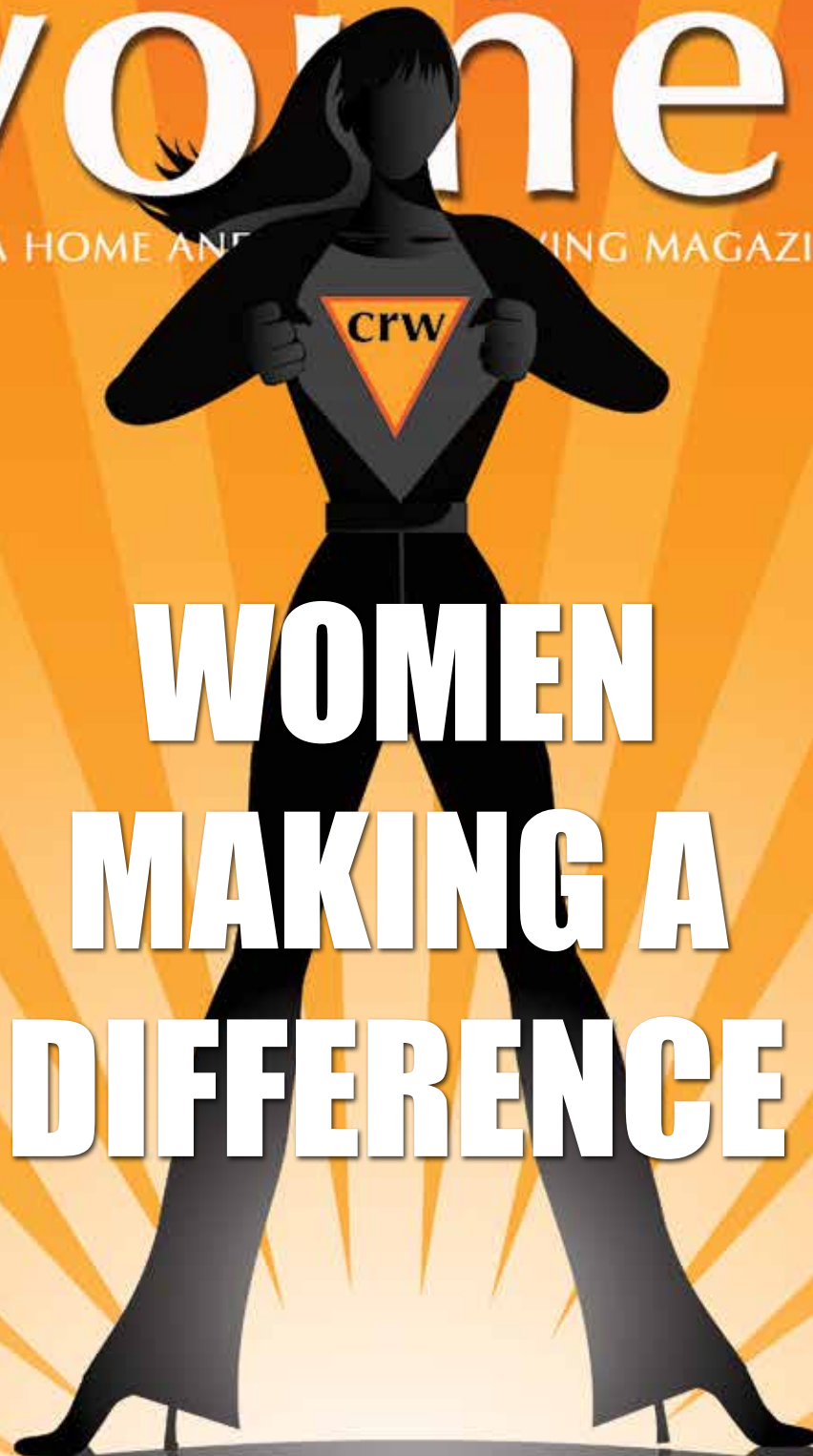


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AREA HOME AND LIVING MAGAZINE



WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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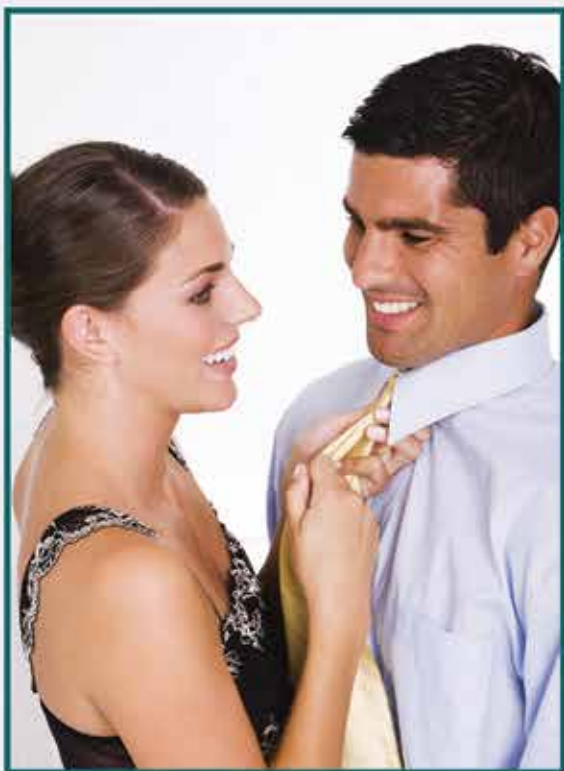
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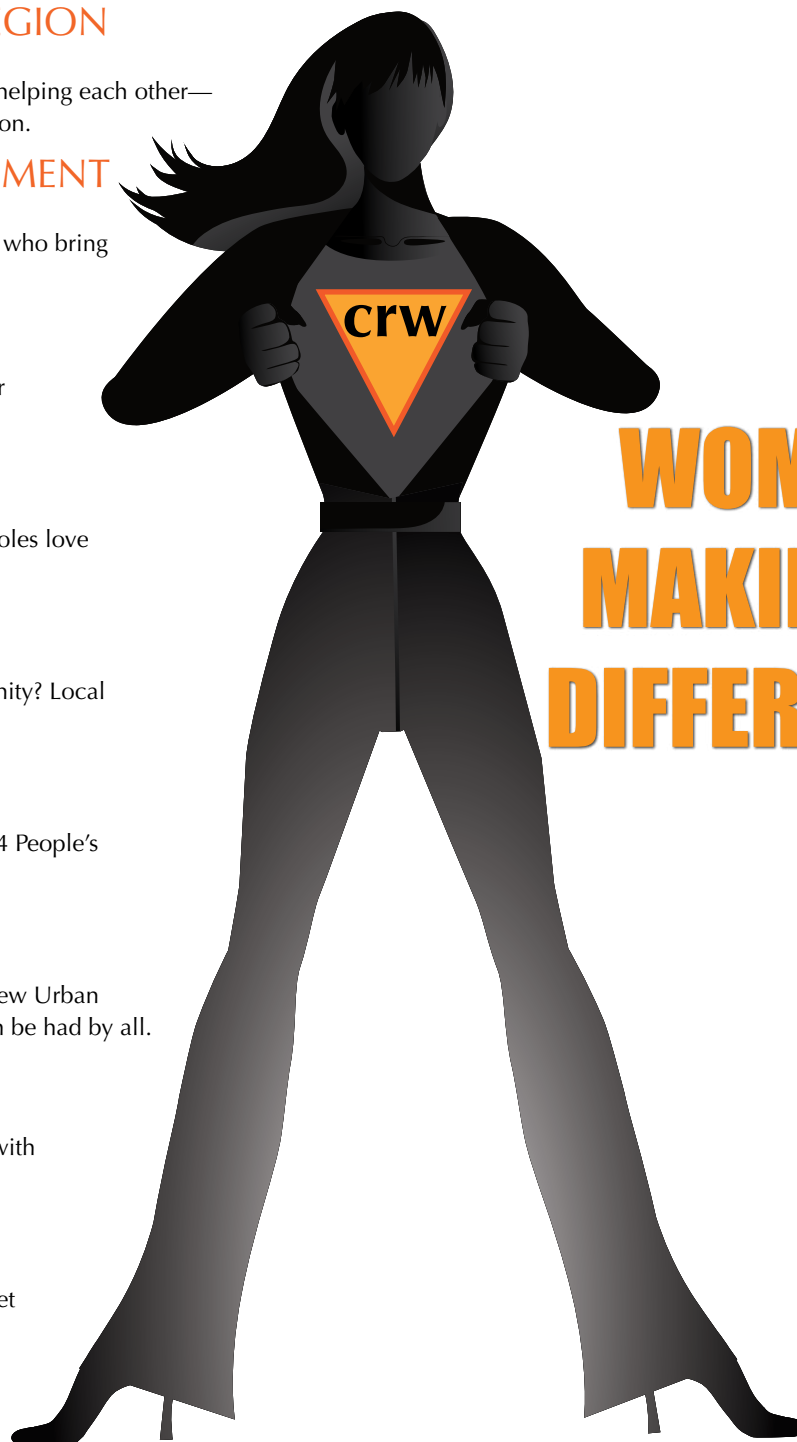
Kim Hammer's extraordinary vision lights the way for local travelers.

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women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE



WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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When we began planning this issue of *Coulee Region Women*, we had big ideas about taking a different approach. With a theme of “Women Making a Difference,” we quickly assembled a long list of women to feature—then just as quickly began brainstorming a plan to include as many as possible, beyond the usual confines of our categories.

We weren’t looking for well-known women—although you’ll recognize a few—but women just like you, who make differences every day in ways big and small. Whether she sits on the state senate floor, creates a welcoming environment for children, helps those dealing with homelessness or mental illness, or brings a smile to residents of a nursing home, each woman here makes an impact in the lives of others, by what she does and who she is. What we hope you will see after reading these stories is that you, too,

make differences—in ways big and small—for the people you encounter each day.

Departures from routine—like this big idea of ours—can raise unforeseen challenges. There was the day we ran across town and back photographing as many of these women as we could; there were countless interviews and the steep challenge of describing deeply interesting women in very few words. But we were rewarded by meeting many of these women face-to-face, hearing incredible stories and being inspired ourselves by their passion and commitment.

The person we could never have foreseen including in this issue, back when we planned it, was the President of the United States. Yet on July 2, Barack Obama visited La Crosse, and publisher Diane Raaum, photographer Jen Towner and I were there, nestled between local reporters and the White House travel pool in the press box. We couldn’t help but notice a number of our featured women in the audience. And the president’s overall message—that we are at our best when we work together for the good of all—could not have better complemented our own message of making a difference.

We hope you’ll be inspired by the stories that follow. We are honored to introduce these women to you and believe that they embody President Obama’s words from that day: “We’re a community; we’re a family ... if we make things a little better for our fellow Americans, we’re going to leave something better for us and for our kids. And if we’re walking down that road together, we’re going to get there faster.” The “Women Making a Difference” in this issue of *Coulee Region Women* are paving that road.

Betty



coulee region women

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PUBLISHER
Diane Raaum

EDITOR
Betty Christiansen

DESIGNERS
Lisa Houghton Design
Jaclyn Kronser

MARKETING ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES

Carol Schank, Director
Sandy Clark
Claire Ristow-Seib

PROOFREADER
Laura Rowlett

WEB MASTER
Mader Web Design LLC

PHOTOGRAPHY
Jen Towner Photography
Jordana Snyder Photography
Megan McClusky, Atypik Photography

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Citywide Marketing Services, L.L.C.
Jennie Kolek
Joanne Mihm

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40 YEARS OF GREAT FOLK MUSIC

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Great River Folk Festival August 28-30. As has been tradition for the past four decades, the Great River Folk Festival will provide wonderful musical entertainment including Susan Werner and the String Ties, Cory Chisel, Luray, Beth Wood & David Stoddard, Runaway Dorothy, Jillian Rae and many others. Saturday and Sunday activities will begin at 10 a.m. and will include a traditional arts and craft fair, children's activities, various food vendors and a songwriting contest. Concert times vary; for more information and to see a list of events, visit www.greatriverfolkfest.org. Tickets are available for purchase at the Peoples' Food Coop and Pearl Street Brewery as well as on the Great River Folk Festival website. Don't miss out on this fantastic La Crosse tradition!



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Being a teenager can be difficult. Keeping up with the demands of school, friends and peers isn't always easy, and having outdated or ill-fitting clothing doesn't help. First Lutheran Church in Onalaska is here to help! Visit its Teen Clothes Closet, where teens can get gently used clothes and shoes as well as new socks, undergarments and toiletries at absolutely no cost. First Lutheran Church recognizes a need for this in our community and has provided trendy clothing for all occasions, from casual to formal attire. Families or teens who need the clothes can contact the church to arrange a time to try items on and choose the clothes they need. If you know a teen who could benefit from this program, contact the church at 608-783-2236 or visit their website at firstlutheranonalaska.org/clothescloset/ to fill out a form.



GROW YOUR BRAIN LA CROSSE

Looking for some family fun this fall? Spend September 12, 2-7 p.m., at Deep Roots Community Farm at W4406 County Road YY in La Crosse for the 2015 Fall Festival on the Farm. Proceeds go to GROW La Crosse, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting children to healthy food and nature. A delicious meal featuring fresh, organic fruits and vegetables and pulled pork sandwiches will be included with your ticket, and vegetarian meals are available upon request. Enjoy activities including live music, a silent auction, children's events, cooking demonstrations by local chefs, yoga and much more! Take advantage of this sensational fun, family event right here in the Coulee Region. Purchase your Early Bird Tickets before September 5 at www.growlacrosse.org, JavaVino or the People's Food Co-op.



Want to join your community in supporting local breast cancer research and awareness? Step out in pink for the 10th annual Steppin' Out in Pink walk this Saturday, September 12, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Gundersen Heath System's La Crosse Campus. Sport your best pink attire and walk with a team, friends, family or even by yourself to honor survivors and remember loved ones. All ages are welcome, and there will be music, entertainment, kids activities and shopping galore. A portion of all vendor sales will benefit Steppin' Out in Pink, which supports breast cancer research initiatives at Gundersen Medical Foundation. By collecting pledges to support local breast cancer research, you can also earn prizes! Sign up before September 7 at www.steppinoutinpink.org, and the event fee is only \$20. We hope to see you there!



Do you know an outstanding woman in the Coulee Region? Now is your chance to honor her. The YWCA is accepting nominations for its annual Tribute to Outstanding Women event. Each year these awards are given in recognition of women with a high level of personal and professional accomplishment and their positive contributions to the improved quality of life within the Coulee Region community. You can fill out a nomination form at www.ywcalax.org, and forms are due September 9. The Outstanding Achievement Awards will be given out at a ceremony on Thursday, November 5, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at the La Crosse Center's South Hall Ballroom. For more information contact the YWCA at 608-781-2783, ext. 226.

A photograph of a woman and a young girl wrapped in a plaid blanket, looking out a window. The woman is in the background, looking out, and the girl is in the foreground, looking towards the camera. The blanket has a green, orange, and blue plaid pattern. The background is a soft-focus view of a window looking out onto a green landscape.

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WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

You don't have to look far to find a woman making a difference in the lives of those around her. She may or may not have an instantly recognizable name; she may or may not have a powerful position in an impressive career. Most likely, she is a woman just like you, who, every day, inspires and gives hope to the people she encounters.

For this issue, we at *Coulee Region Women* gathered a list of women we know to be inspirational. Some you certainly have heard of, some you may meet here for the first time. All are making a difference to women, children and those in need. They do this by following their passion and their heart.

EDUCATION

Jacklyn Goetsch, Emerson Elementary
Regina Siegel, La Crosse School District
Sarah Migas Collins, Winona State
University
Jennifer Kosiak, University of Wisconsin-
La Crosse

COMMUNITY

Shelly Gentry, La Crosse County Aging and
Disability Resource Center
Kim Cable, Couleecap
Jamie Schloegel, Family & Children's Center

WOMEN IN THE REGION

Lynnetta Kopp, Coulee Region RSVP
Ruthann Schultz, YWCA of La Crosse
Mary Behrens, Women's Fund of Greater
La Crosse

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Mandy Parmeter, La Crosse Community
Theatre
Jean Hayden, painter

POLITICS

Jennifer Shilling, Wisconsin Senate
Minority Leader
Jill Billings, Wisconsin State Representative
Tara Johnson, La Crosse County Board Chair

HEALTHY LIVING

Chelsea Kaminski, Bethany Riverside
Xue Xiong, Mayo Clinic Health System
Kristie Ristow, Move It or Lose It
Jean Colburn, Gunderson Health System

THOSE WHO CAN ... TEACH

Area educators make a difference for their students ... who then make a difference for others.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN

JACKLYN GOETSCH, EMERSON ELEMENTARY

A second-grade teacher at Emerson Elementary in La Crosse, Jacklyn Goetsch seeks to make school a positive experience for all “her kids.”

Goetsch is in her classroom by 7:30 each morning, preparing for the day. Her kids arrive at 8:20, and “that’s when the hoopla starts,” she laughs. She greets each child at the door, welcomes them in and gathers them for the “morning meeting,” injected with a dose of silliness to start the day off right. Goetsch feels strongly about creating a positive atmosphere and a safe haven for children. “My biggest hope is that they want to come to school and love to come to my room,” she says. “If they are comfortable here, they are able to learn.”

Goetsch’s days are packed: She teaches language arts and math before lunch, then science, social studies and individualized instruction in various subjects—all while juggling the learning and social needs of 18-plus children. Art, music and P.E. classes provide a break for prep time and grading, and long after the kids leave, she’s still at school, attending staff and committee meetings. Still, Goetsch goes the extra mile to ensure the individual needs of each student are met. She hosts a “homework club” after school, for example, and “candlelight lunches” and other special events help every student feel they are an important part of her class.

Goetsch is inspired by the awesome teachers around her, but one in particular stands out: “Miss King, my first-grade teacher. After having her, I wanted to be a teacher.” And no one has inspired Goetsch like her mother, Joyce Goetsch. “She was always there for me and encouraged me to do what I am passionate about”—making a difference for so many kids.



Photo by Jen Towner Photography

REGINA SIEGEL, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LA CROSSE



Regina Siegel’s title is Director of Pupil Services & Learning Supports, but she’s also been called the “director of hope.” Four years ago, she left her post as principal of Emerson Elementary in La Crosse to help the students, district-wide, who need it most. This help goes beyond academic; she coordinates people and services to support families and children no matter what the need, whether that’s financial help, mental health support or accommodation for special needs. “My goal is to help eliminate barriers to learning so all children can shine, thrive and contribute to their community,” she says.

On any day, Siegel may find herself collaborating with community agencies to address the needs of homeless families; meeting with district staff members housed at the Juvenile Detention Facility; calling parents who have questions or concerns; contacting administrators, counselors or social workers about specific student needs; working with school nurses; securing state funding to assist children or managing home-based education for students with anxiety or illness. “I work with an amazing team of professionals to help children and families any way we can,” Siegel says. “Wherever there’s a need that creates a barrier to learning for a child, we try to find a solution.”

Siegel finds inspiration from her 92-year-old Czech grandmother, Mary Ann Stodola. “She holds me accountable to this very day,” Siegel laughs, “and she will always be supporting, inspiring and challenging me to make a difference.” The difference Siegel makes is its own reward. “It’s a blessing to serve the dedicated faculty, beautiful children and supportive families of the School District of La Crosse.”

SARAH MIGAS COLLINS, WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY

A long career in child advocacy prepared Sarah Migas Collins for her current post as instructor of child advocacy studies at Winona State, where she teaches the next generation of “first responders” in the critically important work of protecting children in crisis situations.

Migas Collins’ classes are in WSU’s Child Advocacy Studies minor—which examines what’s at the root of child abuse; global issues including child exploitation, child health and adoption; and system responses to child trauma, including how to identify trauma, how it manifests itself and how it affects children. “What’s most rewarding,” Migas Collins says, “is knowing that what we teach is making an impact.”

Her students are preparing for careers in education, psychology, nursing, social work or law enforcement. The presence of all these disciplines in her classes is itself important, she says. Professionals in these areas often become isolated in “silos,” working independently of each other and occasionally at odds with each other. But in Migas Collins’ classes, they learn to cross-communicate, understanding the perspectives of each other’s professions and pursuing the common goal of protecting children. “It’s frankly an honor to give them this knowledge,” Migas Collins says. “They develop a common dialogue and understand how important it is to work together to really understand what trauma looks like.”

Migas Collins herself comes from a long line of teachers—both her mother, Naomi, and grandmother, Emily, taught in the Chicago public schools for more than 30 years. “They were teachers who, in their heart of hearts, were social workers,” she says.



JENNIFER KOSIAK, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

If you dreaded studying math in school, math evangelist Jennifer Kosiak has news for you. “I’m a firm believer that everyone can be good at math,” she says. “I see a beauty in mathematics—it explains the world around us. I want to share that joy with my students.” As a professor of mathematics at UW-La Crosse who teaches future math educators, that’s exactly what she does.

Step into one of Kosiak’s math classes, and you may catch her breaking into a spontaneous math rap for her students. “We have a lot of fun,” she admits, and she hopes that her students will, in turn, show their students that math is fun, too. “Everybody has to see that they can do math,” she says. And if her students share the joy by prompting the creation of math videos and math raps by students of their own, all the better. “My goal is to model high-level teaching,” she says. “I encourage my students to act as facilitators who help students take control of their own learning.”

Kosiak spreads her joy of math far beyond her classroom. She promotes high-quality mathematics education for all students—pre-K through college—on local, state and national levels. From organizing Math Family Fun Nights at area elementary schools to presiding over the Wisconsin Mathematics Council, which develops statewide math education programs, to implementing the College Readiness Math Massive Open Online Course for high school students, Kosiak lives out her love of mathematics. “It doesn’t really feel like work,” she says.

Kosiak is inspired by her mother, Francine Kosiak—“that strong woman who encouraged me to do anything, even if it was math.”

Betty Christiansen, editor of Coulee Region Women, is herself a descendant in a long line of educators and has deep respect for those who teach.

BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE

Women in helping professions serve those who need it the most.

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI



SHELLY GENTRY, LA CROSSE COUNTY AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

Shelly Gentry has worked in several social work positions during her career, from assisting young families as they applied for economic support to directing seniors with memory issues to the right doctor through the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

She is devoting her last three years before retirement to mental health as a crisis social worker helping people navigate the mental health system—sometimes meeting clients over coffee to discuss adjusting services or doing home or hospital visits.

“One person at a time,” she says. “I just try to let people know there is hope out there and someone cares.”

Gentry usually works with clients for a short time period, but she has helped one woman for more than a year. She says working with families to help them adjust to mental health issues is as important as working with those being committed because they are a danger to themselves or others.

“Most families don’t understand what is going on with their family member,” she says. “It’s pretty scary.”

Gentry has a degree in psychology but was drawn to social work, as she was often pulled to help family members who had physical and developmental disabilities. Inspired by her mother, Jeanette Sedbrook, as well as a strong group of high-achieving, caring female friends who also give 120 percent, Gentry isn’t likely to be sitting around in retirement. Ladies’ weekends, her grandson and quilt projects will help keep her busy while she figures out her next gig.

KIM CABLE, COULEECAP

Kim Cable has spent more than 25 years supporting those who have the least. After 15 years at Riverfront, Inc., helping people with cognitive and developmental disabilities find and maintain employment, she has spent the last 10 years at Couleecap, Inc., providing services to those dealing with homelessness.

She strives to “be the change you want to see” and is reminded every day that she is lucky to have a roof over her head, food to eat and the love and support of friends and family. “There are people I see every day who don’t have any of those things,” Cable says. “That’s what keeps it real for me.”

As director of the nonprofit’s Housing and Community Services Department, Cable spends her days providing oversight to housing programs and staff, doing budgets and reports and meeting with folks who need housing services. Significantly, she helped the state get a better handle on this area’s homeless population by spearheading point-in-time surveys where volunteers physically go out and count the number of people who are homeless.

Last year, she persuaded the La Crosse Homeless Coalition to hold an event where people in need can receive a free meal, haircut and massage, as well as mental and physical health checks—an event that served about 250 people. This year’s Homeless Connection was held July 29.

Cable says her parents, Lee and Judy Cable, taught her to be strong, work hard and help others. “I can see a lot of my mom in me,” she says. “She’s a very strong woman, she’s had to endure a lot in her lifetime and she’s always held her head up high.” She is also inspired by several female bosses, as well as local politicians like Sen. Jennifer Shilling. Cable was elected to the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors last year and has played drums for the La Crosse and District Pipe and Drums in parades for more than 13 years.



JAMIE SCHLOEGEL, FAMILY & CHILDREN'S CENTER

Jamie Schloegel was hired at the Family & Children's Center in La Crosse nine years ago to work directly with youth who were aging out of the foster care system. She was moved by those young men and women who yearned for someone to help guide them. Many of them still recognize her in the community and are excited to tell her their successes.

After a couple years working directly with youth, Schloegel decided fundraising was a better match for her skill set. She now coordinates efforts to meet the needs of homeless youth in her role as director of development at the center. This involves getting all those interested in tackling the issue together with philanthropists to discuss options.

"It's like magic seeing that come together," she says, "this idea of true collaboration."

Schloegel always knew she wanted to work in a "helping profession," so she studied social work at Viterbo University. During that time, in 2004, she was selected to serve a year as Miss Holmen, which allowed her to promote her platform of child abuse awareness and prevention. She's spent the last six-and-a-half years securing the money that funds the child abuse prevention programs operated by the center. Every day as director of development is different for Schloegel, whether she is coordinating fundraising, overseeing marketing materials, meeting with board members or discussing grant proposals.

She and her husband, Joe, also make a difference by serving as foster parents. "Helping one kid can have a huge impact," she says.

Schloegel's mother, Lori Bettsworth, was a great role model and taught her to be there for her child's successes. Pageant director Kim Jackson, whom Schloegel met during her reign as Miss Holmen, taught her to understand her own skills and talents, which she's since put to use for the good of her community. (crw)

Anastasia Penchi is a longtime Coulee Region writer, as well as a wife and mother of two boys, who spends her days reading, cooking and canning vegetables at her home in Genoa.



Photo by Bruce Defries Photography

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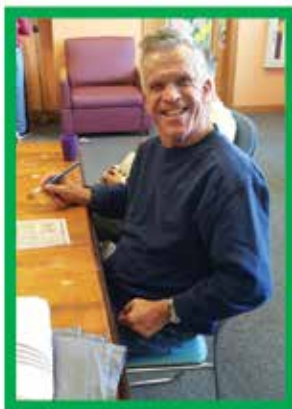
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CREATING CONNECTIONS

**Generations helping each other, women helping each other—
that's the goal of these women in the region.**

BY ANDREA CULLETO



Photo by Jordana Snyder Photography

LYNNETTA P. KOPP, COULEE REGION RSVP

For Lynnetta Kopp, a typical day is an atypical day. “I’ve learned to expect the unexpected,” she says. “But no matter what, I know it will be a day that makes a difference for somebody. That’s what my day is for.”

As the Executive Director of Coulee Region RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteers Program), which pairs adults over 55 with volunteer opportunities, Kopp’s enthusiasm for her work is infectious. Eight years ago, she channeled this energy into creating the organization’s “Who Will Be Smarter Than a 5th Grader?” fundraiser, which pairs fifth-grade students with community celebrities who compete together to raise money.

For Kopp, “The best part is watching the bonding between the student and the adult. That intergenerational bonding is wonderful to see. Many still keep in contact with each other years later!”

Kopp understands the importance of these connections, having been guided and supported by others many times throughout the years. “My mother and grandmother taught me the joy of giving and loving unconditionally,” explains Kopp. “At every age and stage in my personal and professional life, I have always had someone there to mentor and help guide me along the way. Everything I am today is because of someone who cared. I’ve learned that experience comes in many different forms. When someone wants to see you succeed, you’ve got to embrace it.”

That mentoring has now come full circle. Today, Kopp finds great joy in “finding that little gold nugget that makes everybody shine.”

RUTHANN SCHULTZ, YWCA LA CROSSE

As executive director of YWCA La Crosse, Ruthann Schultz’s time is spent attending meetings, collaborating with staff, connecting with program participants and visiting programs at Ruth House, the Child Center and Ophelia’s House—all programs that support women and families in the area. “A workday at the YWCA is never the same as the previous day,” says Schultz. “I like that.”

Schultz is passionate about this work. “The YWCA mission of Eliminating Racism and Empowering Women is a bold and courageous one,” she explains. “Making a difference takes more than good intentions. It means moving the needle forward in our mission by delivering solid programming and creating concrete strategies and actions to promote gender equality and address racial injustice in our communities.”

The YWCA is working to accomplish its mission through early intervention programs for girls, educational services for economic empowerment and intervention programs for homelessness, poverty and addiction. New programs are implemented as need arises. “I am really excited that YWCA La Crosse is introducing restorative justice programming in two middle schools to address the high juvenile arrest rates and the disproportionality of youth of color in the justice system,” enthuses Schultz.

As she extends support to others, Ruthann Schultz is grounded, supported and uplifted by her sisters. “My sisters have been and continue to be my best friends, my voices of reason and incredible role models for living life with respect and compassion for others.” These are lessons that Schultz has clearly taken to heart.



Photo by Jen Townner Photography



MARY BEHRENS, WOMEN'S FUND OF GREATER LA CROSSE

Too many women live at or below the poverty level. As executive director of the Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse, Mary Behrens is helping these women bloom. "We are here to have a lasting effect on women and their families by supporting them at critical moments in their lives," explains Behrens. "These women work hard to hold down a job or even two, to provide and parent often without a partner and to juggle all the needs it takes to keep their families together. The Women's Fund is here to fight their fight."

Behrens is eager to help others experience a stable and fulfilling existence. For her, this involves starting "every day with the loves of my life: my home, my husband, Gary, and our little dog, Luke. Each day I am reminded of how thankful I am for what I have. Once I walk out that door and leave that behind, my day is focused on women who do not start every day like me. I feel as though I am their voice, and I will do whatever it takes so that they will be heard."

Mary Behrens has gained inspiration and support from her mother, Joyce, who supported her as Behrens now supports others. "I had the strength of a woman I was honored to have as my mom," she relates. "She was always there, always a friend and is still here for me today. I can't thank her enough for raising me the way she did." **(crw)**

Andrea Culletto resides in the Coulee Region, where she writes humorous stories and interviews fascinating and inspiring individuals. Find her work at AndreaCulletto.wordpress.com.

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UNITING THROUGH ART

Take a behind-the-scenes look at women who bring beauty to the stage and to life.

MANDY PARMETER, LA CROSSE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Mandy Parmeter laughs when asked about a typical day as a costume designer for the La Crosse Community Theatre. From researching to drawing to shopping for fabric to organizing volunteer sewists, Parmeter looks forward to something different every day.

Originally a music education major, Parmeter was introduced to costume design in a Theater 100 course. "If you worked in one of the shops, you didn't have to take the final, and I knew how to sew. After that show, I kept going back and never stopped." That

love led to graduate school, then freelance designing, then, eight years ago, to La Crosse.

Her mother and grandmother were early sewing instructors, but Parmeter credits two of her graduate school mentors for encouraging her to pursue this dream. They not only taught her the fine details of costume design, but also how to read a script and pursue the necessary research.

Parmeter works hard to ensure "what I do has meaning. So much of what we do is volunteer-driven." It's vital to her that volunteers feel they are productive and

respected, and everything Parmeter does is geared toward that thought. She looks for ways to "make my volunteers feel this is important." Establishing relationships with volunteers encourages everyone to take pride in the production.

The theater is a way Parmeter can connect with other people from all walks of life, and it's a part that makes a difference to her. "The theater is such a great place to meet people," she says. Young or old, employed or retired, "we are together in one place."

JEAN HAYDEN, PAINTER

Jean Hayden records beauty, though her eyesight is failing. At age 93, she works mornings at the Christian Science Reading Room and spends afternoons in her art studio, outlining with squeeze bottles of black gesso and sometimes filling in with color. "I can't see to draw an outline of anything unless it's really dark and black," she explains.

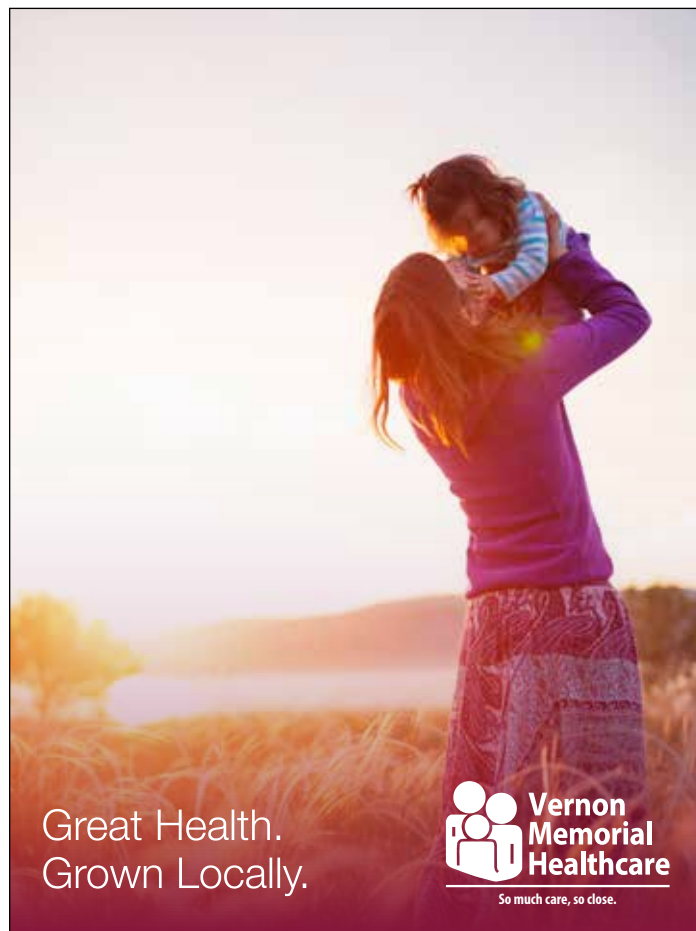
After a career in voice, Hayden spent the next 28 years as a teacher. Upon retirement, "I decided I needed something new and went to California. That's when I picked up my art." When Hayden returned to the Coulee Region, she happened to meet Pam Lee, whom Hayden overheard instructing an art class at Michaels. The two clicked. "I do think Pam has been my inspiration for seven years, and that's the amount of time I've spent here in La Crosse," Hayden states.

Because of Hayden's fading vision, she "went through a very difficult time giving up my art." With Lee's guidance, Hayden delved back in. "I'm no longer a botanical drawer, which was my first love. But anything else is quite free, and it's a very interesting transition."

Despite the obstacle, Hayden held a recent art show at The Pump House. "I sold 17 paintings, and that money goes to a fundraiser for a scholarship fund" directed to Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota.

Hayden's approach to life is advice for us all. "Don't let the little foxes come in and gnaw away at your courage and joy. Always express your joy; it just has to be done." (crw)

Heidi Griminger Blanke, Ph.D. is a Coulee Region freelance writer. She enjoyed learning more about the women featured here and will add them to a list of women who have made a difference in her own life.



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STANDING UP FOR ALL

Down-to-earth women fight
for a stronger county and state.

BY SUSAN HESSEL



JENNIFER
SHILLING,
WISCONSIN SENATE
MINORITY LEADER

When a *Washington Post* blogger listed Jennifer Shilling as one of the nation's 40 most interesting women in politics, she thought it had to be a joke.

"I take my work seriously, but not myself," she says. In fact, Shilling considered it a compliment when another mother told her at the bus stop, "Don't take this the wrong way, but I sometimes forget you are a senator." That mother-to-mother comment meant Shilling balances her dual roles of senator and mother, something that she says her wonderfully supportive husband, Chris, makes possible.

Shilling's inspiration comes from both her late parents and her grandmother, other working moms in the Legislature and women she meets throughout her district.

Whether in her district or at the Wisconsin Capitol, Shilling's days are filled with meetings with constituents and groups. She's so well known for her homemade "Chex Mix Diplomacy," that she sometimes offers to bring some to a senator from across the aisle after a heated exchange. It brings a smile.

Shilling is honored to serve in the Senate, as she was the Assembly. She says she is always there for everyone in her district, not just those her voted for her. "I hope there are issues where we find common ground."

Shilling also seeks a better future for all kids, not just hers. "In the last couple years, we've taken a hit in our public schools, the university system and natural resources," she says. "I'm willing to fight for all sons and daughters of Wisconsin so that we have a state that we are proud to call home."



JILL
BILLINGS,
WISCONSIN STATE
REPRESENTATIVE

Working in a Wisconsin Assembly, where harmony is not always the norm between the political parties, State Representative Jill Billings is known to reach across the aisle.

Having served on the La Crosse County Board helps, as does "having grown up in a family with seven kids. It's important to learn to work well with others, that great kindergarten lesson."

Billings uses relationships to make a difference on issues important to her, namely providing "safe harbor" to victims of sex trafficking instead of arresting them and securing state tax credits for historic preservation projects, something important for La Crosse.

Billings came into office in 2011 in a special election to replace Jennifer Shilling, who was elected to the Wisconsin Senate in another special election.

Billings' days vary, depending on whether she is in the district on Mondays and Fridays or in Madison, generally Tuesdays through Thursdays. In either place, her day is packed morning to night with meetings with constituents and other legislators, committee meetings and speeches to other groups. Constituents often stop her on the street or at various events she attends, sometimes shouting their appreciation to her.

"It's part of the job, but it's also inspiring to see what is being done by other people in our community," she says.

Billings says she is honored to have a "network of women" from many aspects of her life in La Crosse. "I love my community," she says. "I get energized in La Crosse, and then I'm ready to go back to Madison."



**TARA
JOHNSON,**
LA CROSSE COUNTY
BOARD CHAIR

As the story goes, when Tara Johnson's great-grandmother Etta Edwards saw a man toss a cigarette into the street, she spiked it with her umbrella and rushed to the culprit: "I think you dropped something," she told the sputtering man, adding, "smoking is a sin."

Great-Grandma Etta is one of four women in a photo Johnson affectionately labeled "The Battleaxes." They were strong, turn-into-the-20th-century women fighting alcohol and tobacco use and advocating for women's suffrage.

"I feel like they are definitely part of my legacy of public service, of giving back to the community," says Johnson, La Crosse County Board chair. "They were role models for action, for doing."

Johnson leaves her political leanings at the door of her nonpartisan office. Her recommendations are based on what's best for La Crosse County, especially its bottom line. La Crosse County has been a leader on such issues as advocating for expansion of Medicaid, vector (mosquito) control, jail alternatives, land conservation and services to keep elderly people and those with disabilities living in their homes.

"We are really a very effective, progressive, innovative county, and we have been for a long time," Johnson says.

Johnson, whose part-time job leaves her with meetings from morning to night, calls her work "hard, but a dream job because La Crosse County is so good at so many things. Can we get better? Absolutely. Will we get better? Absolutely. I inherited a solid legacy as a fiscally responsible unit of local government. That legacy is the framework for everything we do." **(crw)**

Writer and personal historian Susan T. Hessel loves being inspired by women who work to improve the county and state for all of us.



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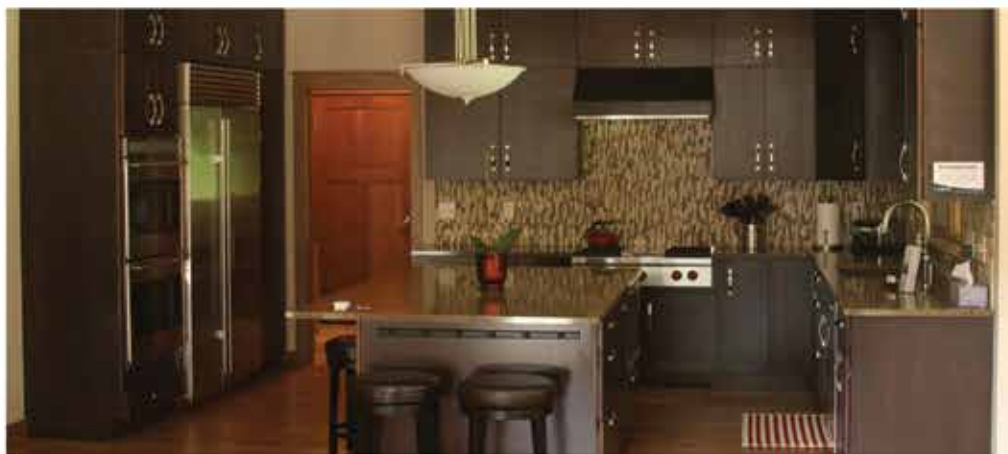
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Parade of Homes® Planbook, August 2015

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Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 1,962

This three-bedroom, two-bath family home welcomes you to comfort all around! It's located just across from the Holland Air Park on a large lot with plenty of space for everyone. The kitchen is built to be efficient and beautiful at the same time. A quartz countertop on the mocha-stained cherry island gives the family a place to gather, and an allspice-stained maple cabinet with staggered heights offers added interest with additional storage capabilities. The beautiful poplar trim, vaulted ceilings and custom rod-iron railing combine to make a statement. The house has great curb appeal with siding accented by stone and shakes. A home should be a place to relax and play, and this home has it with its concrete patio for family cookouts or additional two-and-a-half-car detached garage. We see possibilities—this house is built with something for everyone!

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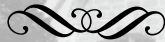


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Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 1,910

This custom-built open-concept home boasts more than 1,900 square feet finished on the main floor, with a large cathedral ceiling, split bedrooms, a huge laundry/mudroom, maple custom-built cabinetry with granite countertops, maple three-panel doors with white trim throughout, maple railing with white spindles in the great room, a daylight-style basement with framing for two future bedrooms, bathroom and large family room completed.

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SINCE 1999

Bedrooms: 4 • Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 3,221

This stunning, large two-story home is anything but traditional! With 9-foot ceilings, it offers maximum use of space on all levels. The breakfast room and dining room enter from opposite sides of the kitchen for lots of light. Between the dining room and kitchen is a built-in hutch and pantry for easy access.

Unique touches are the layout of the laundry, mudroom and back foyer off the three-car garage and the expansive upper-level master suite, complete with its own sitting room and 13-foot, 5-inch by 7-foot walk-in closet. Three additional bedrooms are upstairs with two additional ready to finish in this wonderful family home. This home is finished with white Mission trim, three-panel doors and white cabinets upon wood flooring.



JON OLSON CONSTRUCTION

Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 2,700

The features in this house just keep adding up for the family! The kitchen is set for Mom to be in her glory with stunning custom cabinets, quartz counters, high-end appliances and a family-friendly, workable layout. The hickory hardwood floors stretch throughout the home and bring elegance and warmth. They sprawl into the living room, which features 11-foot ceilings and a three-sided fireplace. A must-see! The master suite features a tray ceiling, large walk-in closet and beautiful tile walk-in shower and relaxing air tub. The light pours in through the large windows in this home, and it features a future art studio. Dad will be happy with the three-car garage and lots of storage. Efficiency is the word with this home as it features LP siding accented with shakes. This home is nestled on a beautiful wooded lot with a fantastic view. The homeowners will enjoy this home for years to come!



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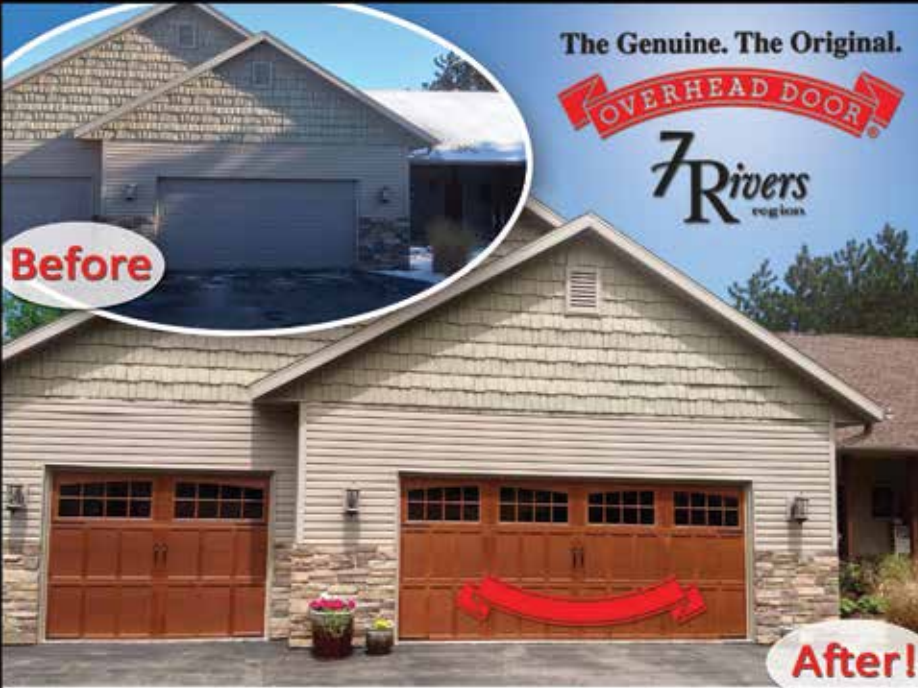
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NORTH COUNTRY CONTRACTORS

Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 1,783

From the huge wraparound front porch accented by seven stone half columns to the custom-built cabinetry, attention to detail is apparent when you visit this home. The home features more than 1,770 square feet finished on the main floor, all with 9-foot ceilings, a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace with custom-made mantel, a covered rear deck and a finished three-car garage. In addition, the basement is framed in for two future bedrooms, a bathroom and a large family room.

Come see the craftsmanship that goes into a home built by North Country Contractors. North Country Contractors prides itself in being a Home Building Specialist company with Mike Reschke personally having more than 30 years' experience in the homebuilding industry.

LABA members used: Bagniefski Heating & Air Conditioning; Maxwell-White Plumbing, Inc.; Badger Corrugating Co.; Wisconsin Building Supply.

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Meier Farm



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**1124 Rolling Oaks Drive
Onalaska**

Meier Farm



SINCE 1986

Bedrooms: 4 • Baths: 3 • Square Footage: 2,550

Here is another beautiful home designed by MasterCraft Homes, Inc., conveniently located in the Meier Farm neighborhood of Onalaska. Its open floor plan between the kitchen, dining room and living room (featuring an electric fireplace with built-in cabinets and shelving) makes entertaining friends and family simple. Vaulted ceilings and large windows combined with wood flooring and Mission-style trim create a warm and inviting atmosphere. The master bedroom on the main floor has its own bath with dual vanities and a spacious walk-in closet. A mudroom/laundry room, second bedroom and full bath complete the main level. The basement is finished with a large family room, two bedrooms, a third full bath and ample storage space. Outside you will find a large fenced-in backyard complete with a shaded patio, creating a nice space for outdoor gatherings.

LABA members used: Absolute Comfort Heating and A/C, LLC; Maxwell-White Plumbing, Inc.; Overhead Door Company of the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.



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**434 2nd Avenue North
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SINCE 1989

Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 2,100

This twindominium features an open concept with three bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths. A two-car garage and a large deck are located off the back, with other features including a fireplace, maintenance-free exterior, rustic birch Mission-style cabinets, three-panel solid oak doors and Mission style trim. These twindominiums are competitively priced at \$188,500 per side.

LABA members used: Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Carpets to Go; Glass Interiors of La Crosse; E & B Insulation; Heating & Cooling Specialists; JBrooke Garage Door, LLC; Retaining Wall Specialists, Inc.; Waldenberger Poured Walls, LLC; Badger Corrugating Co.; Wettstein's; Balduzzi Midway Lumber Co., Inc.; Wisconsin Building Supply, Inc.

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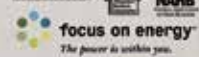
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NO.	BUILDER	PHONE	ADDRESS	SUBDIVISION	BED	BATH	SQ FT	PAGE
1	Jon Olson Construction, Inc.	781-5428	N8728 Hanson Dr., Holmen	Lorraine Estates	3	2	1,962	4
2	North Country Contractors	769-4663	N7293 Eagle Rd., Holmen	Cottonwood	3	2	1,910	7
3	Lifetime Design Homes	386-0638	W6305 Pinewood Dr., Holmen	Wildwood Valley	4	2.5	3,221	8
4	Jon Olson Construction, Inc.	781-5428	N6118 Grayhawk, Onalaska	Grayhawk	3	2	2,700	9
5	North Country Contractors	769-4663	1943 Pine Ridge Dr., Onalaska	Meier Farm	3	2	1,783	11
6	Mastercraft Homes	781-7200	1124 Rolling Oaks Dr., Onalaska	Meier Farm	4	3	2,550	12
7	T.N. Thompson Enterprises	792-8453	434 2nd Ave. N, Onalaska	NA	3	2.5	2,100	14
8	Marlin Custom Builders, LLC	779-4617	819 Main St., Onalaska	NA	4	4	2,200	18
9	City of La Crosse	789-7393	521 9th St., La Crosse	NA	3	2.5	1,736	20
10	Jones Construction	386-8292	139 S 19th St., La Crosse	NA	3	3	3,600	22
11	Western Technical College	785-9200	751 24th St. N, La Crosse	NA	3	3	2,597	25

Your Vote Counts!

When you purchase a ticket to the annual Parade of Homes, you take on an important responsibility. One of the highest honors a LABA Builder Member can receive is to have his or her Parade entry named "People's Choice," and you have the power to make that happen.

Here's how to cast your vote for the "People's Choice" Award:

- Purchase your Parade tickets in advance of Opening Day for just \$8, or at any Parade Home during the Parade for \$10.
- Visit as many of the Parade Homes as you like. Your ticket will be punched at each home you visit.
- When you are finished with your tour, indicate on your ticket which home was your favorite, then deposit the ticket in the box provided at each home for this purpose.

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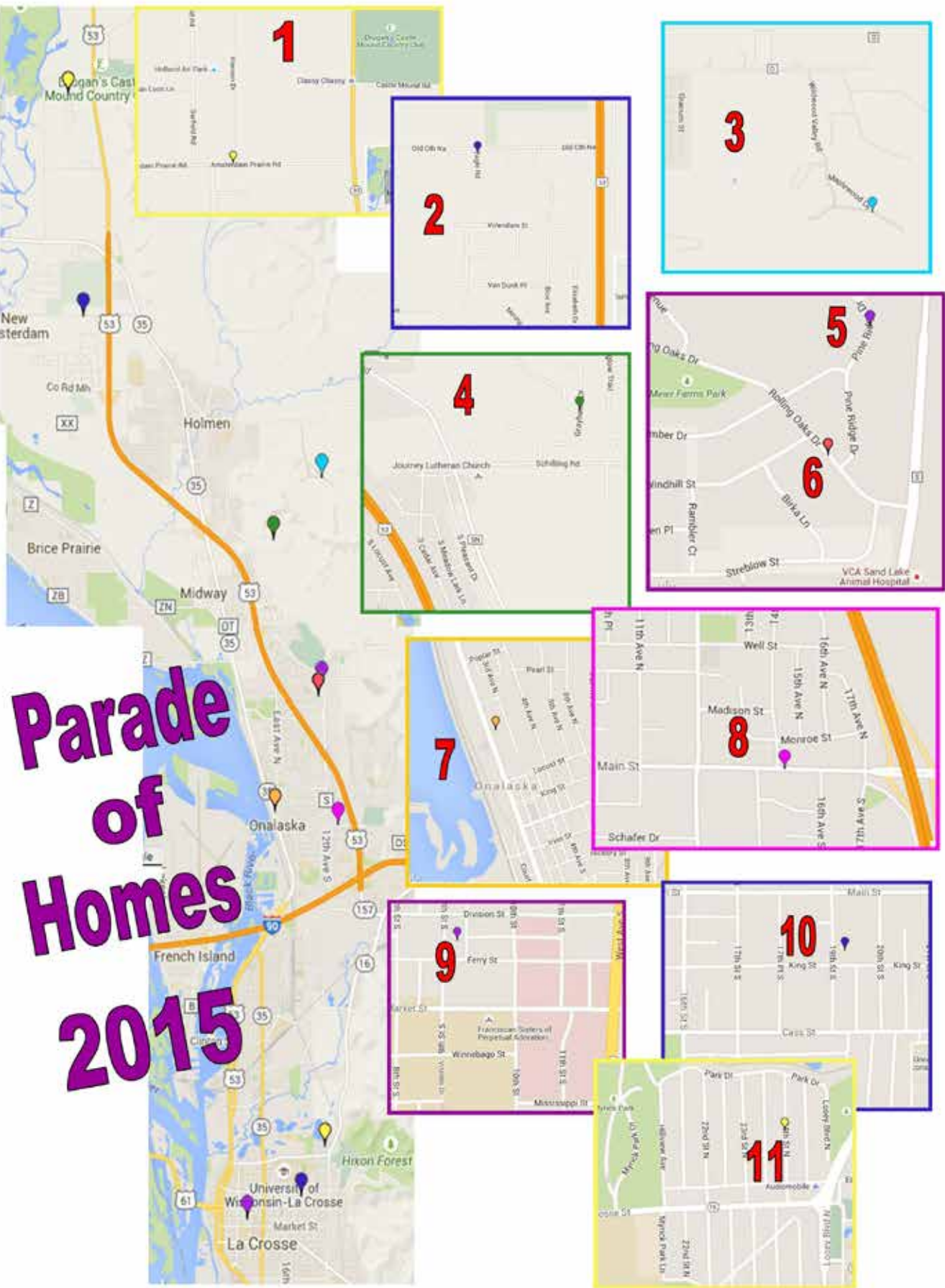
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**819 Main Street
Onalaska**



SINCE 2004

Bedrooms: 4 Baths: 4 • Square Footage: 2,200

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We would love to talk to you about this home and how you can benefit from working with an experienced general contractor with years of experience in homebuilding science.

LABA members used: Beaver Builders Supply, Inc.; Carpets to Go; Overhead Door Company of the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.; Advanced Seamless, Inc.

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**521 9th Street
La Crosse**

Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 1,736

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This home's living areas fit all your needs with charm. The kitchen features a breakfast island and opens to the dining and living areas. This home is inviting and spacious; your guests will appreciate the exceptional craftsmanship, custom-made cabinets, hardwood floors and new appliances. There are also two-and-a-half baths, a second-floor laundry and a two-car detached garage. The basement can easily be finished to add an additional bathroom, a family/rec room and a bedroom. Priced at \$138,900, it will be sold to an income-qualified family.

LABA members used: Bagniefski Heating & Air Conditioning; Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.; Builders Flooring, Inc.; Hess Excavating & Plumbing; The Marble Shop; Ultimate Insulation; Wettstein's.

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**139 South 19th Street
La Crosse**



SINCE 2014

Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 3 • Square Footage: 3,600

This addition and remodel proves that you can keep a classic feel while incorporating the newest technologies. This beautiful 1916 home sits in the heart of La Crosse, which was one of the reasons the owner loved it. This project included a total “gut” on the interior, while leaving the original exterior largely untouched. Interior work included new plumbing, electrical, HVAC, spray foam insulation, drywall and finishes. The beautiful entry, staircase, foyer and living room feature all original floors, doors and woodwork—even the mantel and fireplace cabinets. The original windows on the main level are all rebuilt and refinished to keep the classic features of this home. This home features the classic 1916 original look and build, but also incorporates 2015 technologies, from full home audio and security cameras to a complete Savant lighting system, which allows you to control your home from anywhere you have Internet access. If you want to remodel or add on to your home, stop by this beautiful home and see the possibilities.

LABA members used: Elite Electrical Solutions, LLC; Every Plumbing & Heating, Inc.; Builders Flooring, Inc.; Rohde Painting, Inc.; Beaver Builders Supply, Inc.; Design Masonry, LLC; Windows by Pella, Inc.; Green Built Insulation LLC; Absolute Comfort Heating & A/C, LLC; Advanced Multimedia Solutions; Advanced Seamless, Inc.; Ledegar Roofing; Ziegler's Landscape by Design.

ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT



La Crosse Area Builders Young Professionals

by Sue Weidemann, La Crosse Area Builders Association Executive Officer

For the last several years The La Crosse Area Builders Association (LABA) has seen a decline in younger building professionals getting involved with the home builders association. They attend fewer meetings, participate in fewer events, and seem not

as engaged with how the organization functions or its purpose.

LABA asked a handful of the next generation to come in and talk about starting a group that was for them specifically, members 40 and under. LABA asked the tough questions of why they didn't find value in the organization and the answer was pretty much what we thought...this is my Dad's thing, it's boring, they are busy with their families and it's too long.

Our next mission was to get them to talk about what kind of organization would benefit them and how they see their future in the building trades. The discussion was pretty loose at first but then more specifics started to surface. Things like, I would like to start my own network for potential business partners and subs, I would like to have fun and sometimes bring others to the meetings, and I would like to get involved, be active and so on. So LABA said OK, you have the controls. You design how it should look, how often it meets, dues, the structure of the group and how it would relate to the main association.

This group was excited and decided to start forming the look and feel of the LABA Young Professional (YP) group. They decided they would have two main goals for their group. First, they wanted members to build solid, professional relationships with each other by networking between themselves and other people in the industry. Second, the group wanted to focus on giving back to the

community and helping out wherever they could. For the first couple of months the group met once a month and decided they needed to meet more often to get anything done. After they started meeting twice a month things started coming together. They formed a "business group" who were the main participants in setting up the mission statement, meeting times, dues and the rest of the Young Professional structure. After these had been established they set up their first event and the core group sent out invites to others in the building trades to join. The first "social" had over 25 people attend with 18 making commitments to the group.

As the group progressed they saw a decline in the social meetings, which they came to the conclusion, was because it didn't meet the needs of those interested in becoming a part of the YP. They then styled the meetings to be a good mixture of formal and informal so they can have some fun while getting things done, meeting new people, and giving back to the community. This group has already made an impact on the community by projects like a Little Free Library that is placed in a members yard, helped with a pancake breakfast's for the local YMCA, built Christmas tree stands for a non-profit, built a birthday throne for the Children Museum all in the first 9 months.

They have encouraged others to join their social events to be able to meet people, hear what the plans for the group are, as well as learn about upcoming projects that are in the works. They also encourage a



more open discussion about ways for the group to give back; by soliciting ideas from new or interested members in hopes those potentials will take more ownership. They have reached out to others to speak from the community and the state. LABA is very encouraged by this group!

LABA is also seeing this group at more of our general membership meetings, volunteering for the larger organization more and bringing more of the next generation's voice to the table. We have more renewed faith in the future of the trades and the industry surrounding them.

They do things differently; they are more electronic, more immediate and more reactive to what is going on. We highly suggest starting a group at your local so as these groups grow, they can grow their networks farther and become part of the future of Wisconsin Builders Association (WBA) as well.

LABA Young Professionals Mission Statement: Our mission is to develop the next generation of building industry professionals through networking and education while bettering the community through volunteerism. 



Our mission is to develop the next generation of building industry professionals through networking and education while bettering the community through volunteerism.

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WHAT LABA IS

The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a nonprofit trade organization uniting 210 building-related companies in western Wisconsin. We educate our members on the latest in the building industry, are advocates of the building industry, provide networking opportunities and run the Parade of Homes and Home Show.

WHAT LABA DOES

The La Crosse Area Builders Association works to better the building industry; we are watchdogs for changes that can affect homebuilding and remodeling. We offer a membership of trained, qualified and insured builders and tradespeople to the consumer. We do the homework so consumers can build, remodel or repair their homes with confidence in our members. From builders to electricians, plumbers, concrete, roofers, landscapers, fireplaces, stone work, heating and air, they and so many more affect the work on your most expensive purchase ... your home.

WHY USE LABA

LABA members are insured, sign a code of ethics and do continuing education to keep up with industry standards. One phone call can open doors to having a better experience when doing home projects. When choosing to work with a LABA member, you can feel confident that they are not a fly-by-night business. You can feel confident that they have ties to the community and often do service projects to help build a better community in which to work and live.

We get calls all the time from consumers who are having issues with their builder or someone doing work on their home who is not a member of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, and all the calls end the same way: "Next time I am going to call LABA before I hire someone." Our list of members is FREE to everyone and is available on our website at www.labaonline.com. We are your first call or place to search for help with your home!






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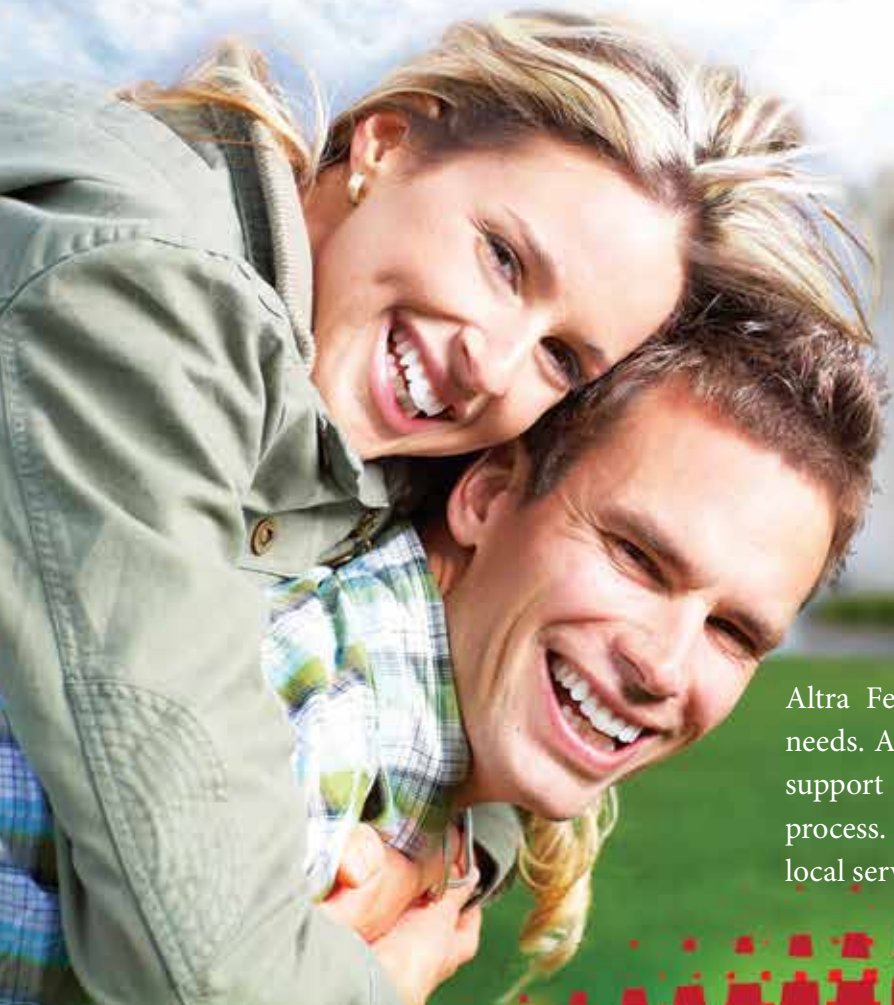
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MANY WAYS TO CARE

Health care professionals in a variety of roles love making a difference in patients' lives.

MARTHA KEEFFE

CHELSEA KAMINSKI, BETHANY RIVERSIDE



Photo by Jen Towner Photography

For the past eight years, Chelsea Kaminski has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Bethany Riverside Nursing Community in La Crosse. During that time, she has spent countless hours making beds, washing laundry and visiting with residents and their families. She has bathed the infirm, encouraged movement through exercise and gently coaxed the sad and forgetful back to their rooms. "I'm often told how difficult it would be to do my job," says Kaminski, referring to the discomfort many feel in nursing home settings, "but I don't see my job as a chore or the residents as a burden. What I do is very hands-on, and I've never been shy about diving right in."

Raised along with her two siblings by a single mom, Kaminski relates how the loneliness of that situation worked to create a special bond between herself, her grandmother and those she cares for at Bethany. "I started taking care of my grandmother when I was little," says Kaminski. "And when she died, I felt like I lost my best friend. But being able to share my time with the residents makes me feel like she's here. I believe that through these people, God lets me be with my grandma."

And whether she brightens the residents' day by bringing her 5-year-old daughter, Emma-Lynn, in on her days off, by painting someone's fingernails or by assisting in keeping messy hands clean during mealtime, she finds joy in her work. "I could have continued my education and moved on, but this is where I belong," she says. "Some people say they'd be sad if they worked here, but I say the work makes me genuine. So if someone needs to cry, I'll go ahead and cry along with them. When I'm with my residents, I have nothing to hide."

"You know what," says Xue Xiong, an interpreter for Hmong patients at Mayo Health System in La Crosse. "I found out that I am pretty valuable."

Born in Laos, Xiong immigrated to St. Paul, where she lived with her family until the fourth grade. Compelled to speak English at the same level as those who had arrived before her, Xiong was determined to become fluent in the language. Within two years of taking English as a Second Language (ESL), Xiong's language skills steadily increased from Hmong, to Hmong-lish (a hybrid of Hmong and English), to a level at which she felt proficient. "We were taught that this country has everything we need in opportunities," she says. "But you need to know the language to take advantage of them. I know what it's like not to understand, and that drove me to want to become an interpreter."

After completing online courses and certifications, which included one year of medical terminology, Xiong worked as an interpreter for Gunderson Health System in La Crosse before coming to Mayo Clinic Health System, where she has worked for the last five years. "My job is very challenging every day," she says, explaining that much of Western medicine, especially medication names and medical practices, are foreign concepts to the Hmong population. "Our culture relies more on herbal remedies, and we don't talk about illness—we believe that makes the person weaker." Therefore, it's the desire and ability to create an understanding between a patient who might be unwilling to cooperate and a doctor who is naïve about the Hmong culture that makes Xiong passionate about what she does.

"Sometimes I'm a superwoman because I have to fight to make everyone understand. But I'm confident. I'm a qualified interpreter, I know my job and," she says with a laugh, "that makes me pretty exciting."

XUE XIONG, MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM



KRISTIE RISTOW, MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Kristie Ristow is committed to getting older adults excited about exercise. As owner and lead personal trainer of Move It or Lose It, an in-home personal training and exercise program based in La Crosse, Ristow hopes to educate older adults about the benefits of exercise and give them the confidence to continue with a fitness program on their own. “I felt that there was such a need for seniors in this area, so I decided to target that age group,” says Ristow. “For them to realize that there are things they can do to help preserve their independence through movement and exercise is really empowering.”

By focusing on the concept of “functional training,” Ristow coaches her clients—such as Jean Helliesen, pictured at right—to learn exercises that strengthen their bodies so they are able to perform everyday activities on their own. Sessions run either 30 or 60 minutes long, and Ristow has her clients use 2- to 5-pound weights to increase intensity at a manageable level. “We take so much of what we do on a daily basis, like vacuuming, climbing stairs or simply getting in the car, for granted,” says Ristow. “But without properly maintaining our fitness levels, it’s easy to lose our coordination, strength, balance and flexibility, which



makes it difficult to function. That’s why I do what I do—I enjoy helping improve the quality of life for seniors.”

From volunteering with the La Crosse County Strong Seniors program to improving the strength and coordination of a 94-year-old so that she is no longer bound to her chair are examples of what keeps Ristow going. “My clients are a lot of fun to work with, and I find it rewarding to see improvements,” says Ristow. “And because there will always be a need, I think I’ll stick with it.”

JEAN COLBURN, GUNDERSSEN HEALTH SYSTEM



“There’s always more to the story when I see a patient,” says Jean Colburn, RN and OB Care Coordinator at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. “Not only am I caring for someone who will experience the joy of becoming a mom, I’m here to help patients who have a high-risk component navigate the system.” Tasked with being the liaison between the OB department and other specialty units in the hospital, Colburn spends her days assisting patients who, in addition to their pregnancy, are dealing with health issues such as diabetes, cancer or substance abuse. “I act as an extra set of ears,” she says. “And for a patient who is presented with so much information, having someone make sense of it is such a relief.”

Drawn to nursing for as long as she can remember, Colburn never lost sight of obtaining her degree. Though she postponed college to get married, she believes that the struggles of being a young parent while working to pay for school helps her connect with her patients. “I understand difficulties,” she says, “but I also know that how you deal with those ‘divots in the road of life’ determine your success.”

Always the advocate for the underdog, Colburn feels honored and blessed to be in her line of work. “I have 80 patients on my caseload with a variety of concerns. Some, like a pregnant teen who’s battling addiction, can be heart-wrenching, but knowing that I’m trusted enough to help keeps me going.”

As a former mentor to single mothers attending Western Technical College, for her contributions in health and pregnancy education to area schools, along with her research into the prevalence of illicit drug use among pregnant women in Wisconsin, Colburn received the 2014 YWCA Outstanding Women Award in Health. “There have been so many positive stories associated with these programs that I’m so happy to be a part of them,” says Colburn. “All I can think is ‘wow.’” 

Martha A. Keefe lives and writes in La Crosse. She enjoys the opportunity to share inspiring stories of inspiring women.

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YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, TOO

Want to “be the change” in your community? Local volunteers share their tips.

BY EMILY ALLEN



As women, we all are capable of making a difference in people's lives, in ways big or small. If you're looking to make a difference in your own community, take inspiration—and advice—from two active La Crosse volunteers.

After nearly 30 years of strengthening the tight-knit community of La Crosse, Sara Sullivan became a City Council member. She has served on five boards and served on the Women's Advisory Task Force, the LGBT Task Force and the Diversity Council at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where she taught in the Department of Psychology for 27 years. After retiring two years ago, Sullivan looks back to her full-time work schedule and says, “I wonder how I had the time for a full-time job.”

Another one of La Crosse's valuable volunteers is 34-year-old Courtney Kubly. She is a determined and ambitious woman with a passion for social justice, empowering women and supporting children. For the past 11 years she has worked as the Merchandise Manager of TJ Maxx and HomeGoods and leads a team of 30 associates. Her successful career and charismatic volunteer work earned her recognition as Coulee Region Woman of the Year in 2010 and 2014.

Kubly passionately believes that “even one person can make a huge impact ... and everyone has something to give.” Here's how to find your niche in the Coulee Region.

1. Find volunteer opportunities related to your children's activities—in sports, school, libraries and churches.

One of Sullivan's most treasured experiences has been reading to elementary school children through The World We Live In (WWLI). “I have found my WWLI reading experience to be absolutely nourishing for my soul,” she says. “Children's openness, insight and enthusiasm are a source of hope for the future.”

2. Identify an organization whose mission is meaningful to you and ask about opportunities to volunteer or serve on its board.

Kubly became involved with volunteering in 2009 when she saw an ad for Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers. She and her husband signed up and spent the next two years mentoring a young man. Kubly also holds the Program/Hospitality Chair position with Coulee Region Professional Women and serves on the YWCA La Crosse Board of Directors. Kubly helps women in various ways—teaching literacy, providing mock interviews and assisting with résumé writing.

3. Research volunteer opportunities online.

Try an Internet search with the words “get involved” or “volunteer” and include your zip code—an array of opportunities will be listed.

4. Find local homeless programs and help collect donations, serve on their board or work in a meal program.

Kubly sees the need for volunteers rising. Budgets for nonprofits and government agencies are being cut, but the needs of the community are growing, especially for single-parent families with children.

5. Contact the headquarters of a political party or neighborhood group and ask about volunteer opportunities.

Sullivan serves as chair of the City of La Crosse Neighborhood Revitalization Commission. She collaborates with city officials and neighborhood leaders to improve community relations and the physical environment in La Crosse neighborhoods. She has participated in numerous neighborhood cleanups and, above all, treasures the relationships she has created.

6. Ask friends and family about places they volunteer and boards they sit on.

Anyone can become involved by finding an organization that piques their interest and asking for the opportunity to help. Sullivan says, “Often in volunteer settings we get the chance to know someone whom we might not otherwise have encountered.” Kubly agrees and adds, “You will get much more out of it than you put in.” *(crw)*

Emily Allen loves interviewing and writing about women in the community because it allows her to feel more involved amid being a busy mother of three.



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EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE

The kitchen is the centerpiece of the 2014 People's Choice Home.

BY JULIE NELSON

Photos by Megan McCluskey, Atypik Studio



When Jane and Bob Fisher of Holmen were first approached about being a host for the 2014 La Crosse Area Builders Association Parade of Homes, Jane admits she was a bit apprehensive about allowing 1,500 strangers to walk through her brand-new dream home. But she says it all turned out to be an enjoyable experience. "It made you feel good to hear all the positive comments; I'd do it again," she says. As a pleasant surprise for the Fishers, their home was voted the People's Choice.

Jane couldn't say for sure what inspired other people to vote for their home, but she knows her favorite room is the "chicken kitchen." "My grandma always had chicken-themed decorations in her kitchen," Jane says in explanation of the artwork above the sink and the lamp on the counter. The real attraction of the kitchen, however, goes well beyond the artwork. It's the appliances, the counter, the island and, especially, the space.

Everyone gathers in the kitchen

Jane loves to cook and entertain and is well aware that no matter what the social gathering, people tend to end up in the kitchen. So she designed her space accordingly. In the middle of the room is an island, the spot where guests can sit and chat with their hosts. A small sink, lots of counter space and a pull-out garbage container on the other side of the island allow



Jane Fisher is perfectly at home in her People's Choice home. Unique touches such as a two-sided gas fireplace, top left, add warmth and ambience.

Jane to continue her food prep and not miss any of the conversation. And if Jane needs to access the cupboards, the refrigerator, the stove or the double oven (something she says has come in surprisingly useful), she has plenty of space to walk around her guests and the island without worry of bumping into anyone.

An added touch under the main counter makes cookie baking a lot easier. Instead of leaving the mixer on the counter, or storing it below where it needs to be lugged up every time it is used, Jane has her mixer on a hinged pop-up stand. Open the cupboard below, swing up the mixer shelf and voilà! The mixer is now counter height. It's easy to use, easy to store.

Jane did the interior decorating herself and, chickens aside, says it started when she fell in love with the copper hood that's now over the stove. Everything else—the custom cabinets made of a rustic alder wood, the Cambria countertops and the hickory flooring—she chose to match the copper over the stove.



The Fishers designed their kitchen around the copper hood over the stove. Cambria countertops, alder cabinets and hickory flooring were chosen to match.



The Fisher home would not be complete without a welcoming bar area showcasing their Harley-Davidson decor.

Personalizing a home

Just off the kitchen is a dining room and the oldest piece of furniture in the house. The 28-year-old dining table was a wedding gift and will be part of the family for the foreseeable future. Separating the dining room from the living room is a two-sided gas fireplace. The glass on the fireplace and the high arches on either side continue to give the area a very open feel. The fireplace also adds warmth and ambience to each of the two rooms. The living room is about half the size of the kitchen and is a comfortable space to sit and watch TV or enjoy some after-dinner conversation.

The master bedroom is on the main floor and boasts a bathroom with walk-in closets, a walk-in shower and a deep bathtub. A pocket door between the bedroom and the bathroom makes it possible for Bob, who works for BNSF Railway, to come home at odd hours and not wake his wife, and for Jane, who is a pediatric nurse at Gundersen Health System in Onalaska, to let Bob sleep when she gets ready for work in the morning.



When they're not working, the Fishers enjoy motorcycle riding. Over the years, they have acquired a fair amount of Harley-Davidson memorabilia but never had a good place to display it. The lower level of their new house, specifically the area around the wet bar, has become that perfect spot. The lower level also has plenty of storage, another TV and a guest room,

which also made it the perfect place for one of the Fishers' adult sons to stay for a few months.

Contracting in the Coulee Region

This is the sixth house the Fishers have owned. They are originally from North Dakota, and Bob's career with the railroad caused them to move around a lot. They looked for an existing house in the Onalaska area but couldn't find anything they wanted, so they decided to build.

They knew they wanted to live away from the noise of the city, wanted to be close to trees and grass and didn't want the next neighbor to be too close by. A new development off County Road D in Holmen was the ideal solution.

They contacted builder Mark Smith, whom Jane says was "a peach. He was very agreeable and listened to all my wishes. He is a professional and a perfectionist. He put all the flooring in himself." Jane says Smith also helped her with some of the extras, like stamped concrete outside and a retaining wall in the back made of boulders.

The Fishers are still making little improvements on the house. Jane wants to add some raised flowerbeds in the back, find more plants to put amid the boulders in the retaining wall and replace the living-room furniture. But for the most part, the Fishers are spending their summer enjoying the house. In the evenings, you might find them sitting on the front porch, looking for mushrooms in the woods behind the house or biking around the neighborhood with their dog, Shadow. They enjoy their neighbors and say they have perfect combination of nearby folks they can chat with and neighbors just far enough away that all can have some privacy.

If there are any regrets, Jane says it's that they haven't had enough people over to their house yet. And no, they are not asking to be a part of this year's Parade of Homes; however, finding time to invite a handful of friends over for dinner would be lovely. **(crw)**

Julie Nelson is the public relations coordinator for The Salvation Army. She is wondering if more cookies would get made at her house if their mixer, like the Fishers', were on a movable shelf.

Guests can enjoy the backyard under a flower-covered pergola.

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FILLING THE BASKETS

The Market Baskets program of Hillview Urban Agriculture Center ensures good food can be had by all.

BY DEBORAH NERUD

Contributed photos



Volunteers gather to fill the “baskets,” assembly-line style, for the Hillview Urban Agriculture Center Market Baskets program.

“We try to incorporate at least one kind of local, seasonal produce in each recipe; we aim to cater to all ages, skill levels and palates.”

**—Mary Larson,
Market Baskets coordinator**

Imagine a renewable food source that incorporates the entire food web, from soil stewardship to tabletop, in a bounty that continues to provide, year after year, in your own backyard. In La Crosse, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center has created a sustainable food oasis, and its Market Baskets program is delivering the goods for less than 80 cents per serving—ingredients and slow cookers included.

In 2012, thanks to generous support from the Robert & Eleanor Franke Charitable Foundation, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare and the La Crosse Community Foundation, HUAC introduced the Market Baskets program—an easy, fun and interactive way to bring low-cost, nutritious meals to families’ tables in the La Crosse area. The Market Baskets classes and demonstrations are created to quickly teach participants how to prepare low-cost, delicious meals that require minimal preparation and cleanup using slow cookers.

Healthy meals made easy

The original goal of the program involved the distribution of 800 free slow cookers and enough legumes and whole grains for 20,000 meals to families throughout the La Crosse area, pairing the slow cooker meals with locally and seasonally grown vegetables. “We try to incorporate at least one kind of local, seasonal produce in each recipe; we aim to cater to all ages, skill levels and palates; and all the recipes are vegetarian,” says Mary Larson, the Market Baskets coordinator. Anyone who comes to one of the classes (scheduling is listed on the HUAC website) receives a bag of ingredients, a slow-cooker, recipes and a brief cooking lesson. “The RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteers Program) members have been so helpful,” Larson adds,



including that the ongoing success of the program, which is now entering its third year, “thrives on the continued interest of the wider community.”

In order to expand that outreach, HUAC, in connection with Shawn McManus of Savory Creations and multiple nonprofit organizations in the area, has created Future Iron Chef, a program that invites area middle schoolers to visit the Kane Street gardens, pick out an ingredient and work closely with a chef to compete for the title of Future Iron Chef. “The younger we get folks cooking, the better,” states Larson, adding that “it’s important to inform a younger generation about how to eat healthy—to eat local, to eat food that has traveled less. It creates independence when you can teach people to cook for themselves.”

Supporting a food system

HUAC Executive Director Pam Hartwell elaborated on the need for a sustainable, local food resource by adding, “It’s a great way to teach people about healthy, economical meals that utilize food grown locally, but our other pillars include making soil from food waste, growing food and partnering to create a local food system. Programs around cooking and eating are always well-funded and popular, but we are working strategically to make our soil and growing programs just as well-funded.”

Aware of the need to create more programs and to invite the next generation of healthy eaters, Hartwell states, “A community will only thrive if a coalition of people come together to support a food system that allows a city to thrive—via good soil, good growing methods and easy access to nutritious foods.”

To make a donation, volunteer or learn more about scheduled Market Baskets classes, please visit the HUAC website: www.hillviewuac.org.

MARKET BASKETS SLOW COOKER APPLESAUCE

Serves 16

- 5 lb. apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced (cooking apples such as Jonathan or Cortland are good)
- 1½ T ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 T lemon juice (optional)

Layer apples into a 6-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg over the apples. Cook on Low until apples are soft, 4 to 5 hours (check after 4 hours). Stir thoroughly. Slightly mash with fork if desired. For smoother applesauce, puree in blender or food processor. Applesauce keeps up to a week in the refrigerator and up to six months in the freezer.

76 calories, 0.4g protein, 20.2g carbohydrate, 3.8g fiber, 0.3g fat, 2mg sodium

“A community will only thrive if a coalition of people come together to support a food system that allows a city to thrive.”

—Pam Hartwell, HUAC executive director

MARKET BASKETS BEAN AND KALE CURRY SOUP

Serves 14

- 2 cups dried kidney beans, soaked overnight and rinsed (or three 15.5-oz. cans of kidney, garbanzo or pinto beans)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 bunch kale, rinsed and chopped
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme (or ½ tsp. dried)
- ½ T garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. dried rosemary
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 tsp. curry power
- 32 oz. vegetable broth
- Fresh parsley, chopped (optional)

Add all ingredients except parsley into a 4-quart slow cooker. Add enough water to cover the ingredients (approximately 4 cups). Heat on Low for 8-9 hours or until vegetables are tender. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley.

141 calories, 9.7g protein, 24g carbohydrate, 6.7g fiber, 2g fat, 232mg sodium

MARKET BASKETS SLOW-COOKED REFRIED BEANS (NO SOAK)

Serves 15

- 1 onion, peeled and halved
- 2 cups dried pinto beans, rinsed
- 1 cup dried black beans, rinsed
- 2 T minced garlic
- 3 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper
- ⅛ tsp. ground cumin (optional)
- 9 cups water

Place the onion, rinsed beans, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin into a slow cooker. Pour in the water and stir to combine. Cook on High for 8 hours, adding more water as needed.

After the beans have cooked, strain them and reserve the liquid. Mash the beans with a potato masher or fork, adding the reserved liquid as needed to attain desired consistency. Note: 9 cups of water will look like a lot at first, but it will cook down a bit. Add refried beans to tortillas topped with fresh produce and enjoy a complete meal!

Adapted from Allrecipes.com.

95 calories, 5.8g protein, 17.6g carbohydrate, 2.8g fiber, trace g fat, 460mg sodium [\(crw\)](#)

Deborah Nerud, a freelance writer and urban gardener living in La Crosse with her two children, is a firm believer in sustainable, city-wide edible yards.



CHANGE DIRECTION

Barbara Van Dahlen stands up for those with mental health conditions.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN

Contributed photo



In 2005, psychiatrist Barbara Van Dahlen started a national nonprofit called Give an Hour, which offers mental health aid to military veterans. That effort has since expanded to serve the general public, and on March 23, Van Dahlen hosted the first community launch for the Campaign to Change Direction in La Crosse. At that event and in this interview, Dr. Van Dahlen encourages us all to make a difference in the mental health of our communities.

What spurred you to take Give an Hour to a broader audience with the Campaign to Change Direction?

The Campaign to Change Direction is actually a “prequel” to Give an Hour. It focuses on what’s at the root of what keeps civilians, veterans and families from getting the mental health help they need.

When soldiers in Afghanistan were coming home with PTSD, we encouraged them to step up and ask for help—but we don’t do that in this culture. We don’t talk about mental health conditions; they’re surrounded by shame, guilt and secrecy. That led to Give an Hour, now 7,000 mental health professionals strong.

Then the Sandy Hook shooting rocked the country in 2012, and the White House began looking at mental health. I began talking to the vice president’s office, asking, “What are we missing? What are we not doing in this country that people are falling through the cracks?”

This led to an epiphany. I realized that

if we were ever going to get in front of 41,000 suicides per year, we’ve got to change the culture. We have to recognize that mental health is an issue we can talk about, recognize, get assistance for—and that led to the Campaign to Change Direction.

Logistics Health, Inc., is a founding member of Change Direction. How was your partnership with that organization developed?

La Crosse has a national treasure in Don Weber, who has done so much for military veterans. He’s a huge supporter and thought partner for Give an Hour and a very progressive thinker, building LHI in a way that supports health, mental health and wellness. When I had my epiphany and began putting together a working group of those in health, business and higher education for Change Direction, I described my idea to Don, and he said, “What do you need?” LHI became a founding member of Change Direction, and the next thing we knew, we were holding the community regional launch of Change Direction in La Crosse right after its national launch in Washington, D.C.

Why was La Crosse an important place to hold the community launch?

I come from rural America—rural California—and for this effort, this conversation, this cultural change to be effective, we must work in communities across the country, not just in big cities. It was so moving and powerful to hear people in La Crosse talk about the importance of this for their families, for La Crosse, for their schools. We want to create community models that other communities can look to, and La Crosse is leading the way as we build this network of corporations and people who are helping us change direction.

Change Direction promotes watching for five signs of mental health conditions (see sidebar). If we see these signs in ourselves and others, how can we help?

We want people to recognize these signs and realize that not all mental health conditions require a person to see a professional. We want to help people help

themselves, which may mean counseling for acute or chronic issues, but yoga, meditation, exercise and service all can be a part of our mental well-being. When we can recognize the signs and determine what’s helpful for ourselves—and teach our kids to do the same—we’ll have fewer crises.

How can you help another person? First, reach out. Use your compassion and your relationship to cross that bridge and say, “I care about you—I can see you’re hurting.” That can be the first critical step in finding a solution. Your care, support and encouragement might be enough to get that person on track.

Change Direction also seeks to raise awareness of mental health conditions. What impact can this make?

As we start to identify signs of mental health conditions, and we realize that all of us may, at some point, demonstrate variations of these signs, we begin to change the perception that mental health issues are things that happen to someone else, but instead affect all individuals and all families. We can become a more mentally tuned-in society where fewer people suffer. It would be more likely for people who have an ongoing dialogue about mental health to speak up when things got severe, so they would be drawn to support, rather than taking their own life.

Mental health is a huge global issue and a huge cost to communities, but we really can do so much. I’ll borrow a phrase from Vikram Patel, a psychiatrist in India: “mental health for all by involving all.” Learn the signs, talk to kids, talk to each other—by making this shift, we can create healthier communities. **(crw)**

Betty Christiansen is editor of Coulee Region Women.

Know the 5 Signs

- Personality change
- Agitation
- Withdrawal
- Poor self-care
- Hopelessness

For more information on the five signs and how to help, visit www.changedirection.org/know-the-five-signs

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From left: REDEFINE AMP MD System, \$200; REDEFINE MACRO Exfoliator, \$279. Available from Rodan + Fields representative **Vicky Schroeder**, vickyschroeder.myrandf.com.



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Clockwise from top: Stress-Fix creme cleansing oil, \$28; body lotion, \$31; soaking salts, \$42; body crème, \$50; composition oil, \$30; concentrate rollerball, \$24. All available from **The Ultimate Salon & Spa, Onalaska**.



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Clockwise from top left: Bambooe Washable Bamboo Towels, \$10.99; Alaffia Everyday Shea Lavender Body Wash, 35¢/oz.; Uncle Harry’s Natural Products Essential Oil Tool Kit, \$39.99; Vermigold Worm Casings, \$3.50/qt.; Smile Squared bamboo toothbrush, \$5.99. Available from **Full Circle Supply, downtown La Crosse**.

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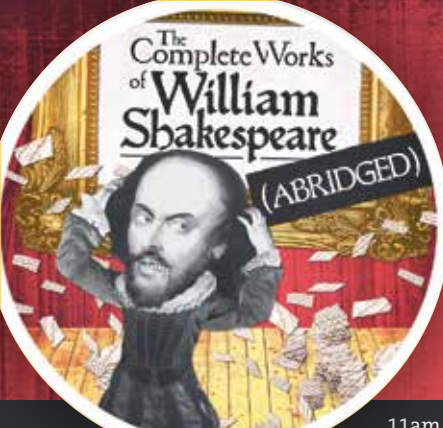
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Her NUW address is 931 Riders Club Road, across from the entrance from Menard's in Onalaska. Visit her also at www.NaturallyUnbridled.com.



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Who will be crowned Miss RemarkAble 2015? Attend Riverfront's Miss RemarkAble Pageant on Saturday, November 7, to find out!

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A PASSAGE TO INDIA

Kim Hammer's extraordinary vision lights the way for local travelers.

BY SUSAN C. SCHUYLER
Contributed photos



Susan Schuyler shows off her new wheels—in India.

India had long been on my travel bucket list, but it never floated to the top until I met Kim Hammer. In January 2015, I joined her and two female companions on an 18-day, customized tour of India's Golden Triangle, with stops in Delhi, Pushkar, Agra and Jaipur.

Hammer, 59, is an experienced travel guide and owner of Sutra Imports, a shop in a beautiful Dakota, Minnesota, barn that features fairly traded, handmade treasures she gathers before and after the tours she conducts to India and Indonesia.

What struck me immediately when I approached Hammer about joining an upcoming tour was her passion for travel's life-affirming power. "Everything is new, amazing and inspiring, and you take that juice back to your world," she says. "You get filled up again."

Facing my fears

I couldn't have said it better myself. I share Hammer's thirst for travel; by last count, I have visited 49 out of 50 states and 40 countries. My travel addiction is so severe that I suffer withdrawal, growing uneasy and restless if there's no "trip fix" on my calendar to anticipate.

But for me, India was scary. Gardiner Harris confirmed some of my worst fears about India's dangers in his May 2015 *New York Times* dispatch, "Holding Your Breath in India." Of the world's most polluted cities, India has 13 out of 25, according to Harris, and the World Health Organization reports that Delhi's air is twice as polluted as Beijing's.

Air pollution isn't the only hazard; according to Harris, about 50 percent of the Indian population defecates outdoors, and the country's rivers and streams carry untreated effluence.

On the other hand, there are breathtaking world treasures I've always longed to see, like the Taj Mahal, that made me face my fears. When Hammer's brochure promised visits to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites, I couldn't resist.

The vast majority of my travel had been to Western, industrialized countries. I found these potential cultural and physical Third World challenges daunting. As a single woman, I often travel solo, but I wanted an authentic journey with someone experienced by my side through India.

Empowering women

I found both during Hammer's tour. She weaves her visionary ethic to support and empower women and local artisans through all of her endeavors. "If we only



Kim Hammer of Sutra Imports leads travelers on transformative trips to India.



The intrepid travelers at the entrance to the Sisodia Rani Garden and Palace, near Jaipur, India. From left, Liz, Kim, Susan and Anna.

shop in a big-box kind of way, if we only take the high-end tours, someday that's all we'll have in the world," she says.

Hammer also says that what sets her tours apart are the long-term bonds she has forged during her eight trips to India and four visits to Indonesia. Her relationship with Avtar Singh, her trusted driver of three years, is a prime example of a relationship borne of mutual trust over time.

Obviously, Singh is good at what he does. As I sat in the front seat of our comfortable, air-conditioned Toyota van, I witnessed him calmly maneuver the impossibly chaotic maze of narrow Indian streets, which were frequently blocked by resting cows and often choked with every imaginable vehicle type, making abrupt, unsignaled lane changes.

However, his genuine warmth and kindness when he graciously welcomed us for lunch with his family at his home was even more amazing to me. "In the beginning, traveling with him was a business relationship," says Hammer. Now we're going to his home and holding his baby."

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For Hammer, it's personal

Hammer cultivates her relationships with her travel companions with equal care, tailoring each tour to meet the unique needs of all of her travelers. "I provide a container of comfort and safety. I'm holding a space for everyone to have the experience they want to have," she says.

Even Hammer's first email to me after I told her I would be joining her was proof of that. The second sentence read, "Let me get a little clearer about your time frame and areas of interest." From then on, it was all about me. When I asked for more information about India, she hand-delivered a tall stack of books, and Hammer sat next to me to gently guide me through the complications of applying for an Indian visa.

Even if you don't have the opportunity to enjoy a tour with Hammer, you can travel with her vicariously during a visit to her shop, where she can share the story of each and every item. Even the name of the shop, Sutra, which is Sanskrit for *thread*, holds special meaning for Hammer. "I named it not just because of my love of textiles, but because there is a thread of connection with the artisan or with the piece," she says.

A road well traveled

Hammer's path to Sutra's door was long in coming and fueled by a personal crisis. She graduated from University of Wisconsin-

Stout with a textile degree in 1978 and soon moved to San Francisco, where she worked at a fabric store and studied massage therapy. She later moved back to the Coulee Region, where she worked for 20 years as a massage therapist and, later, a life coach.

She had a watershed moment at a life-coaching seminar when she finally articulated her goal in life, saying, "What I really want to do is bring this idea of culture, art, travel and fair trade to the world around me."

When she lost her partner to ovarian cancer, Hammer channeled the pain of her loss to achieve that goal. "If you go through a big life change and you don't allow it to change you, what is the purpose of life?" says Hammer.

She was introduced to Marian Nelson, a shop owner and tour guide from Spring Green, Wisconsin. Hammer sold her farm and everything on it and signed on to assist Nelson with her tours for a year.

Training ground

Hammer learned a lot about the business with Nelson's help, and she also gained the confidence to conduct her first solo tour in 2012. It was a "spiritually focused" journey with two women friends, for which she only charged a nominal guide fee.

The next year, she led a "full-on" tour with four travelers through the desert near Pakistan, complete with an overnight camel safari. By that point, she had hired Singh as her driver, and the accommodations were more luxurious.

My tour was her fourth, and Hammer shortened the trip a bit and was more conscious of the aesthetics of the hotels. For example, the Hotel Sunbird, in Bharatpur near the famous bird sanctuary, was a quaint collection of beautifully appointed cabins nestled around a lush courtyard.

Hammer says that if she were ever to write a book about how travel changes her on a cellular level, she would title it *My One-Minute Friend*. Hammer's voice brightens as she describes the brief encounters that make travel worth it. Whether it's an Indian child's first English conversation with a Westerner or a man repairing her backpack in a train station, these brief encounters have become the rich fabric of her life's journeys.

Thankfully, some of those precious encounters are now the textures of my memories of my passage to India, which she so thoughtfully helped me weave. (crw)

Susan C. Schuyler works as a freelance writer and senior lecturer at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse to help pay for her next fabulous journey.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

American Association of University Women (AAUW) 2nd Sat. of each month (Sept.-May), 9:30 a.m., 608-519-0548, aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com, aauw-wi.org.

Business Over Breakfast La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, 4th Wed. every month, 7:30-8:45 a.m. Preregister 608-784-4807, lacrossechamber.com.

Children's Museum of La Crosse weekly programming: **Save-On-Sundays** \$1.00 off admission every Sun., noon to 5 p.m.

Mt. LeKid Climbing Wall open every Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sun. 12-4 p.m.

Wee Move for ages 1-7 with adult, every Fri., 10:30 a.m.

Little Learners for ages 1-7 with adult, every Thurs., 10:30 a.m.

Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW) 4th Tues. of each month, Pogreba Restaurant, 5:30 p.m. Linda O'Connell, linda@take5productions.net.

La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce monthly breakfast meeting. 2nd Mon. of each month, 7 a.m., Radisson. Admission is \$5 and includes breakfast. lacrossechamber.com.

La Crosse Toastmasters Club 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m., Gundersen Health System Urgent Care Bldg., Basement, 1830 S. Ave., La Crosse.

League of Women Voters 2nd Tues. of each month, noon, Radisson Hotel, Nancy Hill, 608-782-1753, nfhill@centurytel.net.

NAMI Family Support Group 2nd Mon. of each month, 6:30 p.m., South Side Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. 6th St., La Crosse.

Onalaska Area Business Association 2nd Tues. of each month, noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, oaba.info.

Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary every Wed. noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, Onalaska.

Onalaska Rotary every Mon. at 6 p.m., lower level of Blue Moon, Onalaska.

Onalaska Toastmasters Club 1st and 3rd Mon. of each month, noon-1 p.m., Globe University, Onalaska.

Valley View Kiddie Crew 1st and 3rd Tues. of each month, Valley View Mall Food Court, 10:30-11:30 a.m., myvalleyview.com.

Viroqua Toastmasters Club 2nd and 4th Thurs. of each month, 7-8:30 p.m., Vernon Memorial Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, Viroqua.

Women in Networking and Support (WINS) 2nd Wed. of each month, Fayze's, noon-1 p.m., Shari Hopkins, 608-784-3904, shopkins@couleebank.net.

Women of Worth (WOW) last Wed. of each month, Shenanigans, noon. Debbie Lee, 608-317-5023, deb@ais-cw.com

Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL) 2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Patti Bartsch, 608-799-8326, nu@naturallyunbridled.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

Aug. 2, Closing Ceremonies of the Great River Shakespeare Festival, 5 p.m., Winona State University Campus, www.grsf.org.

Aug. 5, Feminism on Tap, 5-7 p.m., Cavalier Lounge, 114 5th Ave. N., La Crosse. Speaker: Jackson Jantzen, LGBTQ Connection. www.facebook.com/FeminismOnTapLaCrosse?ref=hl.

Aug. 6, Pump House Season Premiere, 5-7 p.m., The Pump House, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

Aug. 7-9, Irishfest, Southside Oktoberfest Grounds, www.irishfestlacrosse.org.

Aug. 8, Senior Expo presented by Coulee Region RSVP, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Aug. 14, Build-a-Bot Workshop, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration/pre-pay required, www.funmuseum.org.

Aug. 14-16, Kornfest, Village Park, Holmen.

Aug. 14 & 21, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration/pre-pay required, www.funmuseum.org.

Aug. 15-16, Impressions of Nature, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Kickapoo Valley Reserve, La Farge, <http://kvr.state.wi.us>.

Aug. 26, League of Women Voters of La Crosse 95th Anniversary Social, 5-7 p.m., Weber Center, La Crosse. Public is welcome. Contact Peter Nelson, 608-781-1401

Aug. 28, Museum Meet & Mingle, 6-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Aug. 28, 30-Second Film Festival, 7 p.m., Lake Park Bandshell, Winona.

Aug. 28-30, Great River Folk Festival, Riverside Park, www.greatriverfolkfest.org.

Aug. 29, French Island Lions Club 15th Annual 5k Run Walk, 8 a.m., French Island Community Center.

Aug. 29, Back to School Block Party, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Sept. 4, Breast Cancer Walk with the Screaming Eagles Marching Band, 9 a.m., Powell Park, La Crosse.

Sept. 4 & 6, Sesame Street Live, Fri. 6:30 p.m., Sun. 12 p.m., La Crosse Center.

Sept. 7-11, Children's Museum of La Crosse closed for maintenance/cleaning.

Sept. 10-12, 17-19, & 24-26, Heart of La Crosse Comedy Show, 7:30-9:30 p.m., The Pump House, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

Sept. 11-13, Fall Gift Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Sept. 11-20, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged), varying times, La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Sept. 11-13, Elvis Explosion, Fri. 7 p.m., Sat. 2:30 & 7 p.m., Sun. 1 p.m., La Crosse Center, www.ronnycraig.com.

Sept. 12, Steppin' Out in Pink, 9 a.m., Gundersen Health System La Crosse Campus, www.steppinoutinpink.org.

Sept. 12, Fall Festival on the Farm presented by GROW La Crosse, 2-7 p.m., Deep Roots Community Farm, La Crosse, www.growlacrosse.org.

Sept. 13, Grandparents Day Brunch, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Sept. 17-20, Applefest, La Crescent, www.applefestusa.com.

Sept. 19, Walk to End Alzheimer's, 10 a.m., Jaycee Shelter, Winona, <http://act.alz.org>.

Sept. 23, Dukes of Dixieland Concert, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

Sept. 25, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration/pre-pay required, www.funmuseum.org.

Sept. 25, Five Finger Death Punch & Papa Roach Concert, 6:15 p.m., La Crosse Center.

Sept. 27, Keyed In Piano Quintet Chamber Music Concert, 3 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

Oct. 1-4, Oktoberfest, La Crosse, www.oktoberfestusa.com.



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