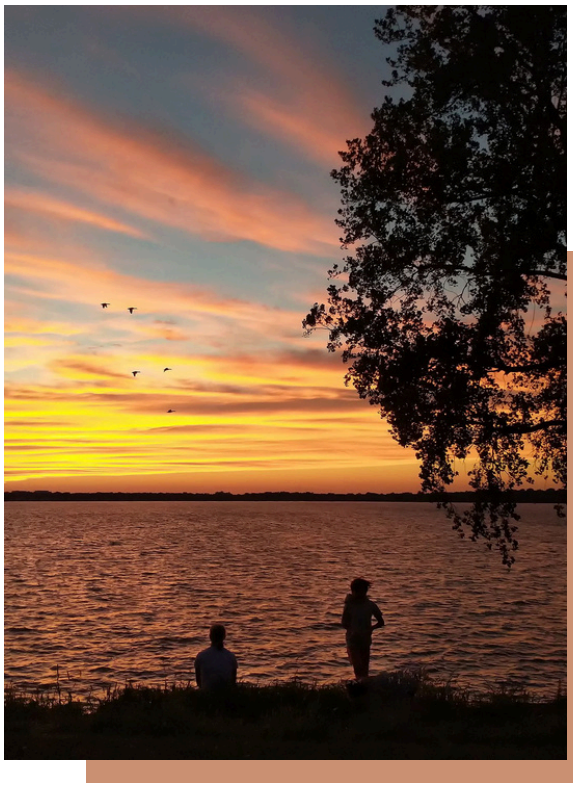


2024
Creating a Legacy, Together

Annual Report

Friends of San Damiano
PO Box 6647, Monona, WI 53716
www.sandamianomonona.org

FRIENDS OF SAN DAMIANO



Letter from our Board President

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Partners,

Reflecting on 2024, I am grateful for all we have achieved together and excited for what's ahead. Friends of San Damiano was founded to transform this extraordinary place into a space for gathering, reflection, and connection—with nature, culture, history, and each other. Thanks to you, that vision is thriving.

Through partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and the City of Monona, San Damiano has become a hub for community engagement, environmental stewardship, and cultural celebration. This year, we welcomed thousands of visitors and helped host the inspiring Harry Whitehorse International Wood Sculpture Festival, showcasing the intersection of art, heritage, and nature.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers, donors, and partners. Supporters like Heidi Fischer, who left a lasting legacy through a planned gift, remind us of the impact each of us can have in preserving this land for future generations.

As we prepare for an upcoming capital campaign, we invite you to be part of this journey. With your support, we will continue investing in leadership, stewardship, and community partnerships to ensure San Damiano remains an accessible lakeside destination of peace, learning, and natural beauty.

Thank you for believing in this mission and making a difference. I am honored to stand with you as we Create a Legacy, Together.

Wes Mosman Block
Board President



Mission

Friends of San Damiano was organized to advance the use of the property known as San Damiano as a place for public recreation, interpretive programming, and peaceful reflection.

Vision

To create a sustainable and serene, natural lakeside destination offering recreational, cultural, and education opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Our Core Values



History



Culture

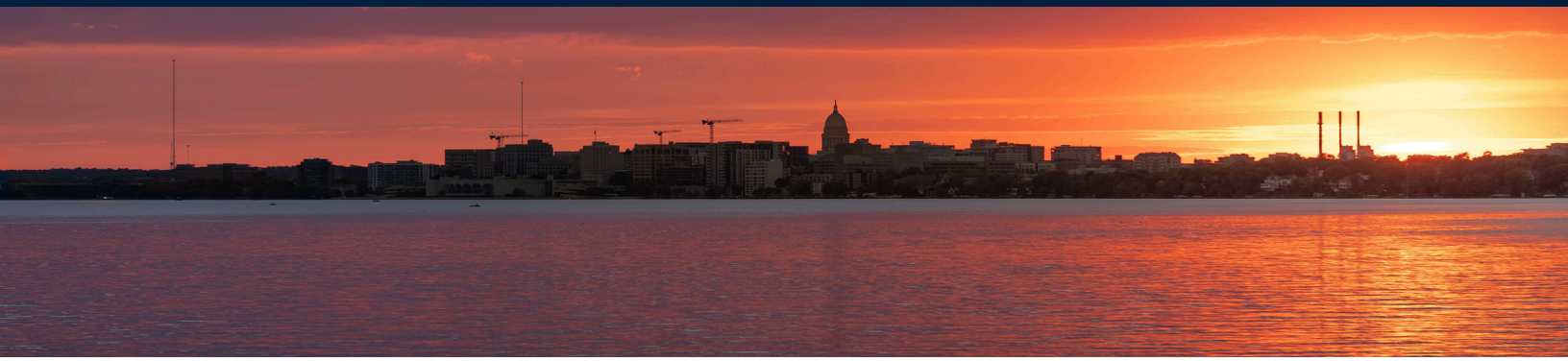


Environment



Recreation

San Damiano possesses extraordinary historical, cultural, evnironmental, and recreational value.



Impact

With your support, Friends of San Damiano expanded public access, engaged thousands through events and programming, and strengthened community stewardship to preserve this historic and natural treasure for future generations.

561k

Dane County Residents

Had the opportunity to access and enjoy this public space.



10k+

Vistors

Participated in events throughout the year.



155

Volunteers

Supported events, projects, and year-round strategic planning.

9

Events

Celebrated culture, history, nature, stewardship, community, and fundraising.



Programs and Events

A Year of Connection, Celebration, and Legacy at San Damiano

The past year was an unforgettable journey of community, nature, and culture at San Damiano. Through a series of engaging events, we brought people together to celebrate and support the preservation of this extraordinary place. Each gathering underscored our shared commitment to making San Damiano an accessible lakeside destination and cornerstone of the Dane County community.

Ho-Chunk Winter Games

In March, we partnered with the Ho-Chunk Nation to host the Winter Games, a cultural celebration in which attendees explored Ho-Chunk history, traditions, and an atlatl (spear-throwing) competition.





Spring Clean-Up

Despite challenging weather, dedicated volunteers came together in April for the annual Spring Clean-Up, preparing San Damiano for the seasons ahead.

World Migratory Bird Day

In May, we celebrated migratory birds by bringing bird watchers together to observe a diverse array of species and showcase the land's crucial role in conservation and habitat preservation.







Bat 101 & Echolocation Hike

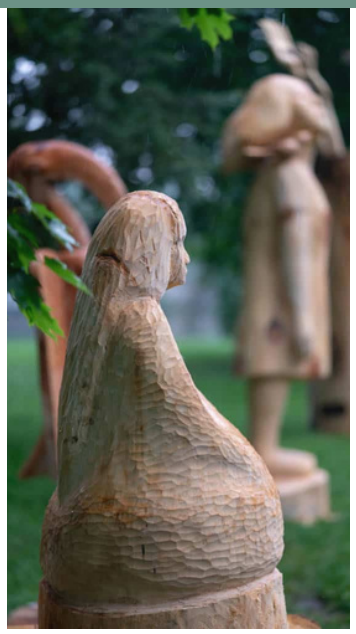
Nature enthusiasts gathered at San Damiano with the Monona Public Library for a bat-watching and counting event, observing bats emerging at dusk and showcasing the site's thriving big brown bat population.

Harry Whitehorse International Wood Sculpting Festival

This past summer, the Harry Whitehorse International Wood Sculpting Festival drew thousands to San Damiano for a 9-day celebration of art, culture, and community, honoring Monona and Ho-Chunk sculptor Harry Whitehorse. The Festival featured live sculpting, Indigenous art demonstrations, traditional Ho-Chunk performances, live music, and interactive children's activities.













Summer Biergartens

Throughout the summer, Friends of San Damiano hosted three lively Biergartens, bringing the community together with music, food, and drinks. These gatherings provided a welcoming space for relaxation and connection.









Celebration on the Shore

The 2nd Annual Celebration on the Shore brought together community supporters to shape the future of San Damiano. With the theme Creating a Legacy, Together the event raised vital funds for stewardship, capacity building, and the foundation of an upcoming capital campaign.











Heidi's Foresight:
Protecting the Sanctuary She Loved

Heidi Jane Fischer was a gentle, wise, and steadfast spirit, deeply devoted to the people and places she loved. She lived with conviction, never seeking the spotlight but always making a difference. Whether tending her beloved garden, traveling, volunteering, or showing up for friends and family, Heidi's presence was deeply felt.

On February 14, 2023, Heidi passed away peacefully at 63 after a courageous battle with cancer. She found immense joy in San Damiano—her sanctuary. Just a short walk from her home in Madison's Lake Edge neighborhood, it became a refuge where she could take in Lake Monona's sweeping views, rustling trees, and a peaceful escape. Even as illness made walking difficult, she continued to visit, finding comfort in this majestic place.

A Vision for the Future

With 30 years in Madison's Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development, Heidi understood the balance between progress and preservation. She believed San Damiano should remain public and opposed any development that blocked the lake, removed trees, or harmed its natural beauty. She saw its potential to unite people and hoped for its thoughtful, community-focused restoration.

"San Damiano was Heidi's sanctuary. No matter what she was facing she found peace in its beauty."



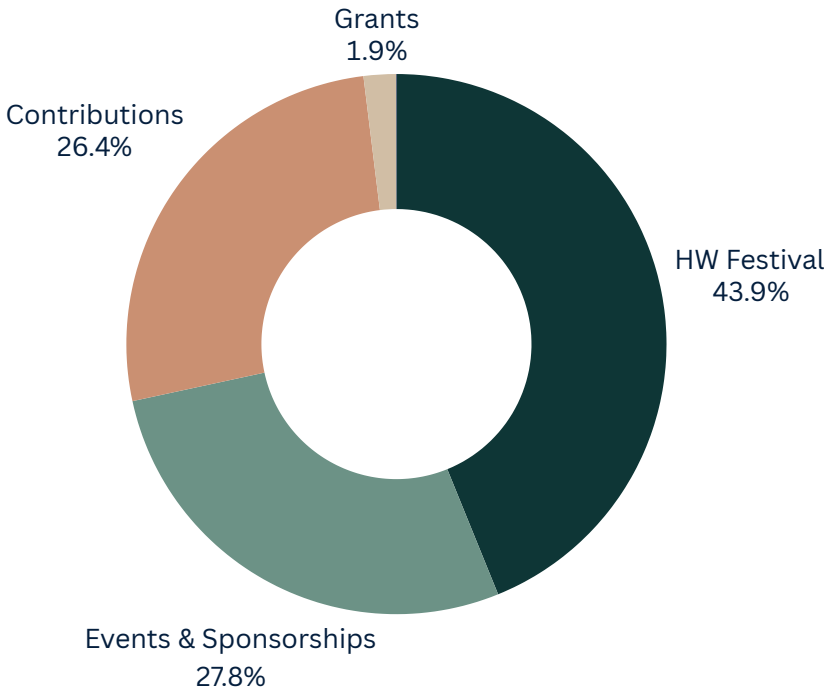
Heidi's Foresight

In a profound demonstration of foresight and generosity, Heidi left a portion of her estate to Friends of San Damiano, ensuring that the place she cherished would be preserved for future generations. Her gift has allowed Friends to continue its stewardship, advocacy, and commitment to keeping this idyllic space accessible for all. Heidi's legacy lives on in the land she loved and the mission she believed in.

We are deeply grateful for Heidi's generosity and vision. To honor her legacy, consider supporting Friends of San Damiano through planned giving, donations, or stewardship. Every contribution helps preserve this special place—just as Heidi hoped.

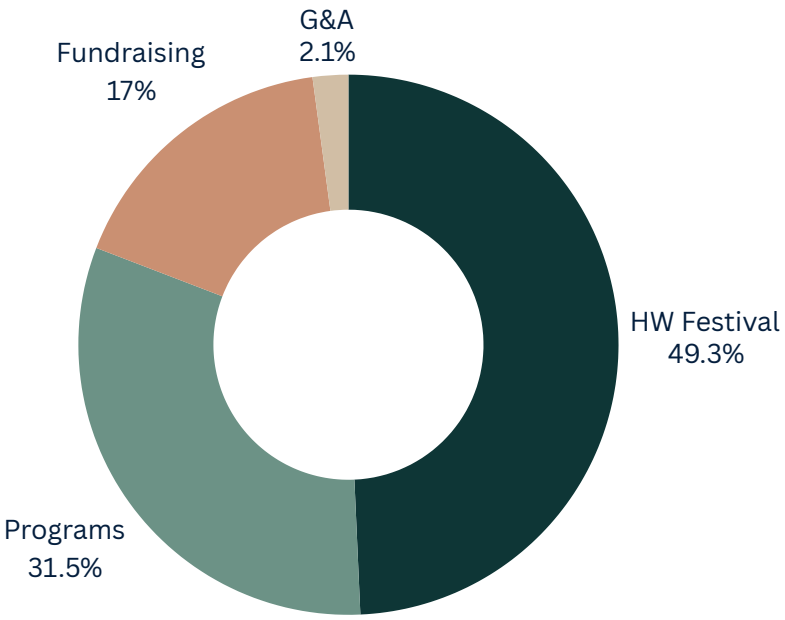
Thank you to Heidi's friends and family for sharing her story and allowing us to honor her legacy.

Financials



Revenue

• HW Festival *	$170,644
• Events/Sponsorships	$108,000
• Contributions	$102,860
• Grants	$7,500
Total:	$389,004



Expenses

• HW Festival *	$170,644
• Programs	$109,175
• Fundraising	$58,976
• General & Administrative	$7,372
Total:	$346,167

* Friends of San Damiano provided fiscal support for the Harry Whitehorse International Wood Sculpting Festival.

Thank you!

Our work is only possible because of your generosity. We want to thank all the incredible individual donors, in-kind donors, sponsors, and grantors who went above and beyond to support our mission.



Sponsors

- Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison
- Chads Design Build
- Hogan Assessments
- The Alexander Company
- Chuck Stonecipher
- Lake Ridge Bank
- Northpointe Development
- MG & E Foundation
- Phil LaSusa & Jesse Sheldon
- McGann Construction
- Full Spectrum Solar
- Hoey Apothecary
- Monona Barber
- Aro Eberle Architects
- The Madison Partners
- Madison Pediatric Dental & Orthodontics
- Susan & Bradley Manning

Grant Partners

- Clean Lakes Alliance
- Dane Arts / Dane County
- Monona Fund
- The Evjue Foundation
- Madison Community Foundation
- City of Monona Tourism

Community Partners

- 98.7FM WVMO
- Acumium
- Aldo Leopold Nature Center
- Buck & Honey's
- Chads Design Build
- City of Monona
- Clean Lakes Alliance
- Crema Cafe
- Dane County
- Discover Monona
- GiGi's Playhouse
- Harry Whitehorse International Wood Sculpture Festival
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- Intentional Purpose Events
- Julep Consulting
- Lake Edge Neighborhood Association
- Madison Children's Museum
- Make Music Monona
- MG21 Charter School
- Monona Community Media
- Monona East Side Business Alliance
- Monona Grove School District
- Monona Parks and Recreation
- Monona Senior Center
- Muskellounge and Sporting Club
- One City Schools
- Salvatore's Tomato Pies
- Smith Group

Volunteers



Thank you to our amazing volunteers! San Damiano and the historic Frank Allis House thrive because of your dedication. Whether serving on the board, assisting with events, tending the landscape, or supporting programs, your efforts keep this cherished space vibrant. Your commitment leaves a lasting impact—thank you!

Board of Directors

- Wes Mosman Block - President
- Andy Kitslaar - Past President
- Patricia Howell - Secretary
- Ted Gunderson - Treasurer
- Juliet Page
- Lynn Laszewski
- Matt Tramel
- Melissa Badini
- Rafael Tudor
- Tony Gomez-Phillips
- Nancy Moore - Monona Alderperson (Ex Officio, Non-Voting)
- Julie Byrnes - Interim Managing Director (Non-Voting)

Communications Committee

- Melissa Badini - Chair
- Julie Byrnes
- Liz Dannenbaum
- Molly Grupe
- Sue Carr

Community Engagement Committee

- Patricia Howell - Chair
- Julie Byrnes
- Karen Turino
- Liz Dannenbaum
- Lynn Laszewski
- Lynne Chase
- Meg Foley
- Nancy Moore
- Tim Turino

Fundraising Committee

- Juliet Page - Chair
- Andy Kitslaar
- Julie Byrnes
- Matt Tramel
- Nancy Moore
- Wes Mosman Block



Get Involved!

This work is only possible with the support of individuals like you. Join us in creating a lasting legacy. Together, we can bring the San Damiano Master Plan to life, transforming San Damiano into a sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant space for all. Watch our video to learn more about our vision for the future.

We welcome the opportunity to connect. Please reach out to us to learn more about how you can partner with us. We look forward to hearing from you!

Julie Byrnes
Interim Managing Director
friendsofsandamiano@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF SAN DAMIANO

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