



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Forward Festival Highlights Inclusivity**

(MADISON, Wis.)—Entrepreneurs of all industries, including healthcare, technology, music and the arts, will be represented during the eighth-annual Forward Festival, which features more than 50 events taking place Aug. 17-24 throughout the city, organizers announced today.

“Forward Festival’s inclusivity has grown to now include a wider range of industries and people, and it’s become more community focused,” Laura Strong, festival committee member and president of Propagate Health, said. “With a record number of events this year, the festival truly gives the entrepreneurial ecosystem opportunities to make connections, share advice and collaborate.”

This year, to give attendees the chance to explore what the festival offers, the new Forward Summit (Aug. 22), a multi-track conference, will include access to the Forward Technology Conference, BigData Wisconsin, Social Impact Data and Healthcare Innovation, among others. James Tamplin of Google and Ben Sperry of Ionic will be the keynote speakers.

Other community-driven events during the festival include the Chat + Chomp + Plan by Heymiss Progress (Aug. 19), Pre-Pride Parade Continental Brunch (Aug. 20) and the inaugural Shaping Tomorrow’s Leaders event (Aug. 17), an event run by 14-year-old AJ Carr on how his mentoring program pairs successful business owners with young people.

On Wednesday, Aug. 23, “Dolphin Tank,” an event like the ABC show “Shark Tank,” will feature two-minute pitches, followed by constructive insights from knowledgeable professionals.

The Forward Festival is sponsored by local companies such as American Family Insurance, MG&E, Epic, Neider & Boucher, WEDC, The QTI Group, Urban Land Interests, M3 Insurance, Boardman Clark, Madison 365, Safety Net, Swink, Wisconsin Union and Ideas that Evoke.

For a detailed listing of events taking place during the Forward Festival, please visit [www.forwardfest.org](http://www.forwardfest.org).

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