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Proposal to install plaques alongside art projects win AARP Wisconsin grant

MILWAUKEE, WI – A proposal to install plaques that explain art projects along Milwaukee’s Beerline Recreational Trail has been selected to receive an AARP Wisconsin “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant.

Grants are being awarded each month throughout 2021 to projects across Wisconsin that are designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age. Judges selected this project for a \$1,000 grant after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over the state.

“This project fits perfectly with the spirit and intent of the Small Dollar, Big Impact grant program,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. “Our goal is to support communities as they make positive changes that inspire long-term progress on livable issues. This proposal hits that nail right on the head.”

The grant proposal is for plaques to be installed alongside artists’ murals and other projects on the Beerline Trail. It was submitted by Darryl Johnson, Executive Director of the Riverworks Development Corporation, who said, “We are honored and thankful to be recognized for the work we do. We look forward to continuing our great partnership with AARP as we finish the project. Our work is all about the community working together to improve the quality of life for everyone.”

The Beerline Recreational Trail has represented unity, art and creativity for over 10 years, Johnson explained. Leaders of its development, as well as local residents, recognize the importance that the art plays through storytelling, inspiration and creative placemaking.

Currently there are 10 murals and art installations along the trail, with three new murals just finalized in July. Each one has a strong and significant meaning behind it, which reflects on the rich culture and creativity of the community.

With the grant, Riverworks, in partnership with the Guiding Lense (a resident-driven trail group), the Beerline Trail Leadership Team, and the City of Milwaukee have partnered to prioritize the implementation of free-standing plaques to be placed in front of a few of the murals.

“These plaques will tell a story and talk about what the artwork means,” Johnson said.

AARP Wisconsin’s launched its “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant program in 2020 and is now in its second year of helping proposed projects move forward in rural and urban parts of the state. All projects must be completed within 60 days from winner announcement.

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities,” said Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin.

“There are so many great ideas and proposals for making life better in communities across Wisconsin. We know how impactful \$1,000 can be. This is our way of extending some seed money to get these projects off the ground.”

The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. For more information on the program, visit www.aarp.org/WIsdbi

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