



Oct. 6, 2021 / FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Flaherty, Communications Director

Office 608/ 286-6308 – Cell 608/ 698-0928, jflaherty@aarpp.org

Sauk County ADRC proposal to deliver Christmas comfort gifts to Meals on Wheels clients wins AARP WI grant

BARABOO, WI – A proposal by the Sauk County Aging & Disability Resource Center to brighten the spirits of their Meals on Wheels clients by providing each of them with a Christmas comfort gift this December 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.”

Marina Wittmann, Aging Program Coordinator for the Sauk County ADRC, said she and the rest of the staff and volunteers are “really excited to receive the grant” so they can begin the process of brainstorming some ideas for the gift bags that will be delivered to all 250 of their Meals on Wheels clients – probably a week or so before Christmas.

“The best part will be seeing the clients’ faces when we make the deliveries,” she said. “This shows we care about them more than just by delivering meals to them. This will bring a little joy to their lives this year.”

Winter can be a difficult time for older adults in Wisconsin, Wittmann explained. “There may be long stretches where they cannot get out to visit their friends and family, due to cold and snowy conditions. Family and friends may also find it difficult to visit the older adult during the cold months. Additionally, holidays can put more emotional stress on older adults, especially those who are lonely and isolated,” she said.

That’s why the ADRC came up with the idea of creating Christmas comfort gifts, which could include items like cookies, candy, or even small plants. Once the gifts are purchased and assembled, each of the 40 to 45 Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers will personally deliver them to clients’ homes along with their meals. For many of these people, “this may be the only gift under their Christmas tree,” Wittmann said.

The \$1,000 probably won’t cover the entire cost of the gifts, although it is a good start. The ADRC will look at other grant opportunities and hope from some contributions from the public to cover the remainder. “Any additional donations would be a bonus,” she 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.

“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

###

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world’s largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP VIVA, a bilingual news source. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.