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Everwood Farmstead Foundation shares funds with area schools

By Kelsie Hoyt

GLENWOOD CITY — Everwood Farmstead is an almost mystical place, where one can find solace inside the old barn as they look out over a field filled with fireflies or while walking on the paths through the woods as the birds chirp and butterflies float past.

The Farmstead, which was previously owned by the Adams family on County Road X is now home to Chris Everett and Bill Underwood.

The story of Everwood Farmstead began in 2010 when Chris and Bill decided they wanted something in the country, something with a barn.

They were looking for a retreat from their busy life in Minneapolis and a place where they could create a legacy of sorts.

They searched for 18 months before they stumbled across the old Adams farm. The barn was in rough shape, but the structure was sound and they knew it seemed to be the perfect place and perfect location to create a feel of "community".

"We wanted a place where we could sit around a big table with our closest friends," shared Bill.

On October 1, 2010 Chris and Bill moved in and officially took ownership of what was once a dairy farm on 57 acres of land.

The barn needed to a new roof and some serious TLC and so did the old farmhouse. So in the spring of 2011, they dove in and began

their upgrade.

By October of that same year, a dear friend to Chris and Bill asked about having a small wedding inside their barn.

The wedding was perfect and things went off without a hitch.

Chris and Bill always knew they wanted to do something special with the Farm, but the wheels really began to turn at that point.

Their vision of "community" came together when they decided this year to create a non-profit organization, which is known now as the Everwood Farmstead Foundation.

Instead of weddings, they decided to create the Everwood Artist Series and call artists, poets, musicians, theater groups, etc. to their stage inside the barn.

On June 8, 2012, they hosted their first artist event, which featured Peter Rothstein- theater director, Sally Wingert- performer, Patricia Kirkpatrick- author/poet and Aaron Gabriel- performer/ writer/director.

The idea behind the Artist Series is to host these different shows and raise money through guest donations that are split between the artists and a local school extracurricular activity.

The first show was a big success and in turn Chris and Bill were able to donate \$400 to the Glenwood City High School FFA Program.

Since that day, the Artist Series has raised almost \$6,000 for

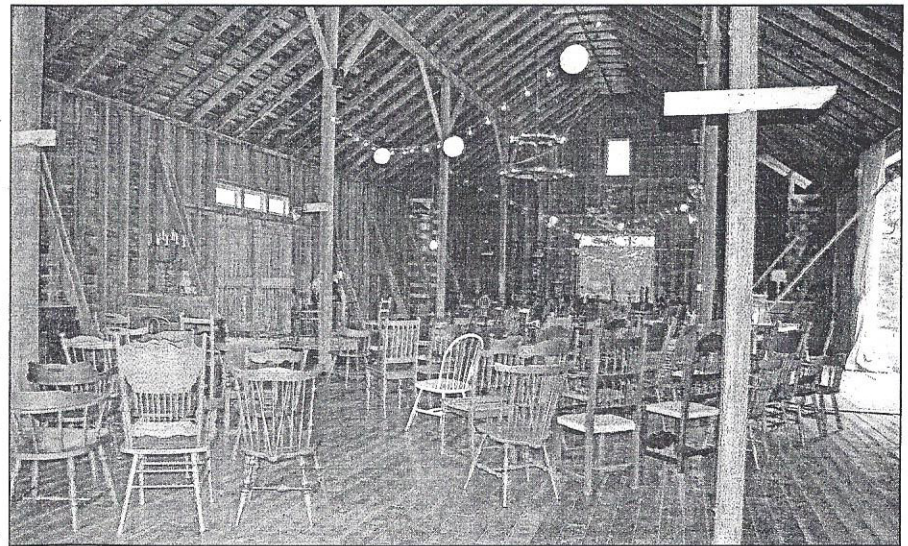
these local school programs; the Boyceville High School/Middle School Art Department, the Spring Valley High School Theater Program, the Prairie Farm Band and Choir Programs, the Baldwin-Woodville High School Forensics team, the WestCAP Operation Back to School Program, the Knapp Elementary School Reading Room, the Glenwood City All-School Musical, the Amery Middle School Anti-Bullying Program, the New Richmond High School Music Department and the Clayton School District Dance Enrichment Program.

The Artist Series is what currently takes place each summer from May to October inside the barn, which offers a completely movable venue with a stage, lighting and seats.

Along with Chris and Bill, the Foundation has a Board of Directors that includes six other members with one being Glenwood City's own Joan Bartz.

"I am just so excited to be a part of this collaboration to nurture artists and create community around their work," said Bartz. "Inspired by the beauty of the land and the history of the buildings, artists are able to be nurtured, find retreat and provide outstanding cultural events, which we find are lacking in our rural area."

In addition to the Artist Series, the Board is working on three additional pursuits: 1. an Artist Retreat, 2. Artist Workshops and 3. Artist Outreach.



THE VENUE - The interior of the barn on the Everwood Farmstead property just outside of Glenwood City on County Road X, offers a great venue for the Artist Series. —photo by Kelsie Hoyt

The Artist Retreat would take place in the original farmhouses on the property. The plan is to create a place where the artist can stay for a period between four to eight weeks and truly focus on their project(s) as they enjoy the tranquility of the land.

The Artist Workshop is exactly that, a workshop provided by the professional artist. The artist will be able to use the property and barn to teach their craft and

tickets will be made available to the general public.

The plan for the Artist Outreach is to encourage artists participating in the Retreat to present and instruct on their craft to a local school or youth organization.

Aside from the current Artist Series, the Foundation hopes that these other pursuits will be available by 2016.

The 2014 Artist Series has now

come to a close with the final event taking place on Saturday, October 11, which featured ARENA Dances "The Main Street Project".

The Board of Directors met last week to discuss events for 2015. You can learn more about the Foundation, future Artist Events and how to sign up for the invite list online at www.everwoodfarmstead.com.