

## 2019 Paul H. Kusuda Special Projects Fund Grant

### Final Report: DeForest

**Amount Awarded: \$3,661**

**Grant purpose:** Attend the International Death, Grief, and Bereavement Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin on June

**Amount:** \$3,661

Project Budget		
Personnel	Hours-DeForest part time case manager	\$312.69
Space Costs	Hotel & meals	\$940.00
Supplies	Registrations & meals	\$1,880.97
Transportation	Mileage reimbursement	\$527.34
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,661.00</b>

**Number of persons served:** 4 case managers attended:

(2) DeForest Area Community and Senior Center – Natalie Raemisch & Roxane Carley

(1) Colonial Club Senior Activity Center – Peggy Draeger

(1) Waunakee Senior Center – Melissa Wozniak

#### **Project Summary:**

Four case managers from three Focal Points attended the International Death, Grief and Bereavement Conference in Lacrosse Wisconsin, 3-5 June 2019. The training provided alternative and creative ways of coping with death, dying, grief, and loss. The music and art were shown as an additional tool in coping with dying, grief and loss. The case managers experienced many moments of profound new ways of understanding grief and loss. We were trained on not only different ways of thinking about grief and loss but actual strategies proven by research to help someone experiencing grief/loss. For example, our senior population might have to deal with the loss of driving, living independently or the loss of a spouse. The conference has sessions to help understand the needs relating to bereavement for diverse groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender black men and children. We now have these alternative tools to support members of our community as they experience and adjust to the loss and grief they are feeling.

The case managers have shared what they learned and have implemented new ideas. Information from the conference was presented and discussed at a DeForest Area Community and Senior Center staff meeting on June 17, 2019. Natalie Raemisch will present at a future Dane County Case Management Training and will coordinate a date with Cheryl Batterman. Other concepts include the following:

1. In our support groups, we have talked about different ways the arts can help a family: gathering the stories of an individual losing their memory, using art and creativity to cope with the challenges of life, using art as a way to remember a family member who has passed and continue to honor them.
2. Following the conference, one immediate change we implemented was the artwork displayed in our client and other meeting rooms. Abstract artwork tends to be interpreted negatively, especially when someone is in a negative mood. Artwork that includes people, flowers, scenery etc. is much easier for someone to interpret as positive and calming. We found multiple pieces of artwork that followed these guidelines and have displayed them. We've even had people comment about the change in a positive manor. It was a concept that had never occurred to us, but it was wonderful to see the positive changes in real time.
3. Case Manager Natalie Raemisch utilized art to ground and/or center herself in her work to help with the challenges of the day to day work. This is something to model and encourage clients to utilize. She gained a new perspective in her work about what people may be going through: grieving, remembering, or simply having a challenging mental health day. A lot of the workshop was helping to put ourselves in their shoes.

Thank you to the AAA Board of Directors for understanding the value and supporting additional education of case management staff.