

WiLS Ideas to Action 2023 Grant - Final Report

Project: *Poem in Your Pocket Day*

Project Lead: Nerissa Nelson, UWSP Libraries (nnelson@uwsp.edu)

Grant Award Amount: \$2,000

Reporting Date: December 2024

Project Overview

The UWSP Libraries received a WiLS Ideas to Action Grant to expand *Poem in Your Pocket Day* beyond campus to the Central Wisconsin region. The project encouraged community members to connect, engage, share, and inspire each other through poetry, highlight library collections, and foster community connections post-pandemic.

Event Date: April 18, 2024

Goal: Rebuild connections across Central Wisconsin through poetry and library engagement.

Accomplishments

Community Outreach

- Contacted over 50 organizations and businesses in Central Wisconsin. Secured participation commitments from 26 organizations.

Project Coordinators

- Established the “*Pocket Protectors Committee*” to manage the project and timeline.
- Committee Members: Nerissa Nelson (Project Lead), Circulation Coordinator, two English Professors.
- Student Ambassadors: Two students created videos and interviewed students about poetry.

Campus Presence

- Created a display in the library lobby showcasing:
 - Poetry from library collections
 - Local poetry publications from *Cornerstone Press*
 - Promotion of Poem in Your Pocket Day

Poetry Engagement

- Held a “Nominate a Poem” contest (this was open to campus and the community):
 - Received 27 submissions, accepted 24. Included original student works for distribution

Visual Identity

- Developed a graphic for promotional materials.

Created a [LibGuide](#) with:

- Downloadable poems for sharing
- Event information and participating partners
- Acknowledgment of WiLS support
- Student Ambassador videos
- Other resources

Distribution

- Printed, rolled, and bagged approximately 4,000 poems (about 100 for each community partner, with additional sets for campus).
- Delivered poems and event instructions to community partners during spring break.

Community Partners

Stevens Point Area:

- Libraries: Portage County Public Library & branches
- Nonprofits: CREATE Portage County; Portage County Literacy Council
- Municipal: Stevens Point Area Visitors Center; The Lincoln Center
- Businesses: ZEST Coffee House, Emy Js, Ruby Roasters, Mission, Main Grain Bakery, Great Northern Distillery, Bound to Happen Books, Kindred Spirit Books, Sojourn Book Sellers, Central Waters Brewery

Marshfield:

- Libraries: Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library
- Government: Aging & Disability Center
- Businesses: Uptown Coffee Co., Thimbleberry Book Store

Wausau:

- Libraries: Marathon County Public Library
- Nonprofits: The Women's Community
- Government: Aging & Disability Center
- Businesses: Red Eye Brewing Company, Janke Book Store, Whitewater Music Hall Brew Co.

Project Timeline

Month	Activity
Sept 2023	Formed committee, assigned roles, reviewed grant goals

Month	Activity
Oct 2023	Contacted community partners for participation
Nov–Dec 2023	Solicited poems for <i>Poem in Your Pocket Day</i>
Jan 2024	Purchased materials (paper, ribbon, toner, bags)
Feb 2024	Launched marketing and advertising campaign
Mar 2024	Distributed poems to partners with instructions
Early Apr 2024	Media outreach, social media promotion
Apr 18, 2024	<i>Poem in Your Pocket Day</i> : community sharing and engagement

Evaluation

- Distributed a short feedback survey to participants
- Positive feedback indicated strong engagement and community connection
- Results will inform potential annual repetition with WiLS partners

Budget Summary

Category	Amount	Description
Staff Time	\$1,000	Student staff hours and interns
Materials	\$500	Printing, paper, ribbon, bags
Advertising	\$500	Paid promotion and graphic design

Outcomes and Reflections

- Successfully expanded *Poem in Your Pocket Day* to include community partners across Central Wisconsin
- Highlighted library collections and fostered local engagement
- Created resources (LibGuide, marketing kit, graphics) for future replication
- Strengthened connections between libraries, businesses, nonprofits, and community members

Thank you, WiLS, for supporting this project and helping us bring poetry to our community!