



Preservation Foundation
of the Lake County Forest Preserves

DATE: November 13, 2019

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Nan Buckardt
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$3,158 grant to support public programs with artists and authors at the Dunn Museum to accompany the temporary exhibition, *Reima Ratti: Life and Art During the Great Depression*.

FINANCIAL DATA: This grant would result in a \$3,158 reduction in unrestricted funds.

BACKGROUND: The Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County is curating an exhibition titled, *Reima Ratti: Life and Art During the Great Depression* using artwork from the Dunn Museum Collection. The exhibition will run from January 25, 2020 to April 12, 2020.

Artist Reima V. Ratti (1914-1945) was born in Waukegan to Finnish immigrants and came of age during the Great Depression when he labored as a rock-crusher with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The back-breaking work became an inspiration for his art and led to his acceptance as an official artist of the CCC Art Program. Ratti's love of art guided his life as he documented the world around him in sketches and paintings of landscapes and his community, until his untimely death at the age of 31. During his short life, Ratti was recognized for his art by the Milwaukee Public Museum and Art Institute of Chicago.

Special exhibitions and related programming help fulfill the Museum's mission by "provid(ing) captivating educational experiences for the benefit of every Lake County resident" while exposing new visitors to the Museum's permanent collections and galleries. This exhibition will provide a unique opportunity to see artwork and ephemera from the Museum's collection on public display for the first time. This exhibition and related programs will introduce residents to a talented local artist, as well as shed light on Lake County during the Great Depression.

Art exhibitions are important to the community as they help visitors make connections to society in both the past and present and help bridge gaps between different groups of people. Viewing art can illicit emotional responses, develop critical thinking skills, and provide opportunities for deep, meaningful conversation. In particular, art therapy for children with special needs can be beneficial by improving self-esteem, relieving stress, and helping manage difficult emotions such as anxiety and depression.

Proposed Project

The proposed project is a series of art workshops and a lecture related to the artwork of Reima Ratti and its connection to the Citizens Conservation Corps (CCC), a national New Deal work

program. The grant will support a painting workshop for adults, an art workshop for children, an art therapy workshop for children with special needs, and a lecture by author Kathleen Duxbury.

Local artists will lead the workshops and provide all necessary art supplies and items for participants. In each class, the participants will use Ratti's work as inspiration to paint landscapes and other images seen in his work.

Our first ever art therapy workshop will welcome those in the special needs community to visit the museum at a time when the museum is closed, providing a low-sensory experience. This program will allow the Museum and its staff to make connections with special needs schools and local organizations.

The final program proposed is a lecture by author Kathleen Duxbury of New Jersey. Duxbury is a well-known CCC scholar and is the author of three books on the CCC, including *CCC Art-Artists of the Civilian Conservation Corps- Reima Victor Ratti*. While writing her book on Ratti, she was assisted by the Museum's curatorial staff to conduct extensive research on our collection. With her keen interest and expertise in the CCC art program, she is the best person to tell Ratti's story. Assistance from the Foundation would enable us to make all programs affordable to the public, with no additional cost other than the price of museum admission.

Project Costs:

Artist Honoraria: 1 adult workshop, 1 children's workshop, 1 special needs workshop	\$1,500
Author Honorarium: Kathleen Duxbury	\$1,000
Program promotion/advertising	\$ 500
District Grant Administration Fee (5% of total grant award)	\$ 158
Total	\$3,158

Sponsorship benefits

As a sponsor of the Reima Ratti public programs, the Preservation Foundation's logo will be prominently displayed on promotional and program materials. Through program promotion and advertising, the Foundation will get approximately 11,000 impressions.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Development Officer/Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation, Education Manager.

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

Date: _____ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____ Nays: _____

Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: _____