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**Investing in nonprofits leaders means investing in the future of our community**

MADISON, Wis., **August 26, 2025** – Next month, 21 Madison area nonprofit leaders will embark on a transformative journey at the Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Nonprofit Center. As part of the inaugural cohort of the Goodman Nonprofit Fellowship Program, these leaders will meet monthly to develop their leadership talents and strengthen their skills to strengthen their capacity for running their organizations.

“These leaders represent a wide range of organizations working in affordable housing to renewable energy, from gender equity and childcare to immigrant and refugee services, from youth arts to public libraries and community centers,” said Andy Davey, Director of the Goodman Nonprofit Center. “Each brings impressive talent and experience as well as a commitment to growth and learning. Through this program, these leaders will be strengthening their leadership, their organizations and, as a result, the wider community.”

The fellowship program, which launches later this month, was created by Madison Community Foundation and the Goodman Nonprofit Center to equip nonprofit leaders throughout the Greater Madison area with the skills, strategies and support they need to make their organizations stronger.

The fellowship’s kickoff comes with a significant boost: a \$1 million gift from Ascendium Education Group, an education nonprofit headquartered in Madison, which will help fund an endowment to ensure the Goodman Nonprofit Center remains a long-term resource for Wisconsin’s nonprofit community.

**Learning Is a Lifelong Process**

The Goodman Nonprofit Center was established in response to a long-recognized need to provide support and training to nonprofit leaders thanks to a lead gift from the Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Foundation in 2024, and the Nonprofit Center’s Founding Partners, whose investments have helped bring this vision to life.

“Ascendium believes learning after high school has the power to transform lives,” said Brett Lindquist, Vice President of Communications and Community Engagement at Ascendium. “By supporting the Goodman Nonprofit Center, we’re helping ensure Wisconsin’s nonprofit leaders have the tools and training they need to strengthen their organizations and the communities they serve.”

**A Dynamic Hub for Nonprofit Leadership and Growth**

Wisconsin is one of only four states without a statewide nonprofit association, leaving organizations to find training and resources on their own, often at the expense of time spent fulfilling their mission. The Goodman Nonprofit Fellowship aims to close that gap, equipping

nonprofit leaders with the skills, networks and strategies they need to succeed. The 21 inaugural fellows will begin meeting in September.

“We’re thrilled to welcome our first class of fellows,” said Davey. “I can’t wait to dig into some rich learning and skill building with an amazing group of thoughtful and dedicated nonprofit leaders.”

### **2025 Goodman Nonprofit Fellowship Cohort Members**

The first cohort of the Goodman Nonprofit Fellowship includes leaders from 21 area nonprofits:

- Jodi Jean Amble, RENEW Wisconsin
- Verónica Castillo, Waunakee Neighborhood Connection
- Emily Hyde Cawley, Wisconsin Women's Network
- Kendra Deja, Solace Friends
- Michael Etheridge, The Road Home Dane County
- Marie Everett, Eastmorland Community Center
- Virginia Hughes, Rooted WI
- Deborah Kaddu-Serwadda, Women in Education Leadership Foundation
- Angela Laufenberg, Samaritan Counseling Center of Southern Wisconsin
- Jason Mack, Open Doors For Refugees
- DeAndre Martin, CEOs of Tomorrow
- Jennie Mauer, Wisconsin Head Start Association
- Rachael Maysels, FairShare CSA Coalition
- Regina McConnell, East Madison Community Center
- Conor Moran, Madison Public Library Foundation
- Mayela Murillo-Finol, Developing Artists, Murals, and Alliances
- Betsy Parker, Aldo Leopold Nature Center
- Esther Ama Safia Ptak, African Center For Community Development
- Rosa Thompson, Black Girl Magic Educational Services
- Geraldine Paredes Vásquez, YWCA Madison
- Tanya Zastrow, Olbrich Botanical Society

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**About Madison Community Foundation:** MCF works with donors and nonprofit organizations to engage Greater Madison in philanthropy and advance a more vibrant and equitable community. It serves nearly 600 individual and 300 nonprofit fundholders, and in 2024, together with its fundholders, distributed \$22 million into the community. To learn more visit [www.madisongives.org](http://www.madisongives.org).

**About the Goodman Nonprofit Center:** Building on MCF’s commitment to serving the needs of donors and nonprofits, the Goodman Nonprofit Center will support nonprofit organizations in becoming more effective, efficient and strategic in their work by offering training, resources and space for collaboration. Find out more at [www.gnpc.org](http://www.gnpc.org).

The Goodman Nonprofit Center’s Founding Partners include Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Foundation, Madison Community Foundation, Roots & Wings Foundation, United Way of Dane

County, American Family Insurance's Dreams Foundation and Ascendium. To learn how you can support the Goodman Nonprofit Center, please contact: 608-232-1763 or

[legacy@madisongives.org](mailto:legacy@madisongives.org)

**About Ascendium:** Ascendium Education Group is committed to making education and training after high school a reality for learners from low-income backgrounds. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we fund initiatives across the U.S. that help learners from low-income backgrounds achieve upward mobility; provide student and employee success solutions to colleges and businesses; invest in education-focused innovations to improve learner outcomes; and provide information, tools, and counseling to help millions of borrowers successfully repay their federal student loans. While we have many roles, we have one goal — elevating opportunity by creating a world where everyone can rise to their highest potential. To learn more, visit [ascendiumeducation.org](http://ascendiumeducation.org).