FOLKLORE VILLAGE

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



OUR HISTORY

For nearly 60 years, Folklore Village has connected generations through a world of traditions. Founded by folk dance pioneer Jane Farwell, the organization grew from her belief that cultural traditions are meant to be shared, experienced, and passed on. After decades of teaching, travel, and study, Jane established Folklore Village as a place where music, dance, crafts, foodways, and community could come together.



Since then, Folklore Village has welcomed generations of participants to celebrate traditions from Wisconsin and around the world. While the organization has evolved over time, its purpose remains the same: fostering cultural understanding through participation and ensuring that living traditions continue to be carried forward for future generations.

OUR CAMPUS



The 94-acre Folklore Village campus stands at the center of everything we do. Once the Farwell family farmstead, it has been carefully shaped over generations into a unified cultural ecosystem that brings our mission to life. Landmarks including Farwell Hall, Plum Grove Church, and the Wakefield Schoolhouse site now share the landscape with the newly opened Aslak Lie House and flourishing prairie restorations. Together, they embody our commitment to preserving cultural traditions, strengthening community, and caring for the land that sustains both.

MISSION AND VALUES



Mission: Folklore Village creates opportunities for individuals and communities to celebrate, experience, and support ethnic and traditional folklore.

Vision: Folklore Village offers an ongoing program of cultural, educational, and participatory folklore activities in rural Southwest Wisconsin, serving regional communities and the Upper Midwest.

OUR CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Cultural Understanding

Folklore Village respects the unique cultural heritage of all peoples. It seeks to foster an understanding of one's own cultural traditions, while nurturing a respect for the values and traditions of others. Folklore Village believes that each individual has folklore traditions no matter their background. Traditions are an important part of who we are and what makes us human.

Intergenerational

Folklore Village believes that intergenerational activities perpetuate a shared sense of traditions, values and community. People of all ages need places and opportunities for joy, camaraderie, and celebration.

Tradition Bearers

Folklore Village encourages the appreciation and continued vitality of folklore through the recognition and active involvement of cultural tradition bearers.

Participation

Folklore Village believes that participation fosters learning, interaction, sharing, and fellowship; and nurtures a welcoming environment.

Land Acknowledgement

Folklore Village humbly acknowledges the Ho-Chunk people, the original and ongoing caretakers of the land that is now home to the Folklore Village community.

From the Board President



Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year at Folklore Village has been one of both celebration and renewal. It has been a year of honoring our past while intentionally preparing for our future—a reminder that traditions endure not because they remain unchanged, but because each generation embraces the responsibility of carrying them forward.

One of the most significant milestones at the end of 2025 was the retirement of our long-serving Executive Director, Terri Van Orman. For many years, she guided Folklore Village with wisdom, dedication, and an abiding love for our mission. On behalf of the Board and our entire community, I offer our deepest gratitude and best wishes for a joyful and well-earned retirement.

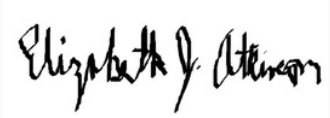
At the same time, we are excited to welcome our new Executive Director, Steve Rice. After a thoughtful and thorough search process, we found a leader who shares our passion for preserving and celebrating traditional arts and building meaningful connections through music, dance, storytelling, and community. We look forward to the energy, ideas, and opportunities that this new chapter will bring.

As we look ahead, we know there will always be uncertainties and challenges. Yet Folklore Village has never been defined by circumstances alone. It has been sustained by people—by those who believe in the power of gathering together to sing, dance, learn, and celebrate our shared humanity.

To our community members, volunteers, donors, staff, and friends: thank you. Your generosity, enthusiasm, and belief in our mission make this work possible. Because of you, Folklore Village remains not simply a place, but a living community where traditions are honored, friendships are formed, and joy is shared.

I am filled with gratitude for all we have accomplished together and with optimism for the journey ahead. The next chapter of Folklore Village has already begun, and I look forward to creating it together.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Board President, Folklore Village

From the Executive Director



Dear Community Members,

As I write this, I am keenly aware that my perspective on 2025 is a unique one. I arrived at Folklore Village in late September and served as Executive Director for only the final three months of the year. That is not enough time to tell the full story of 2025, but it is enough time to recognize something extraordinary when you see it.

Before anything else, I want to express my deep gratitude to Terri Van Orman for her twelve years of dedicated stewardship. The strength, stability, and spirit of Folklore Village today are a testament to her leadership and care, and I am profoundly thankful for the generosity and wisdom she shared throughout this transition.

I am equally grateful to the staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, donors, and the broader Folklore Village community for the warm welcome extended to me and my family. From my first days on the campus, I was met with kindness, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment to this place and its mission. It quickly became clear that Folklore Village is far more than an organization. It is a community bound together by love, and a values that matter deeply.

In many ways, 2025 marked the beginning of a new era for Folklore Village. As long-term projects, including the restoration of the Aslak Lie House, move toward completion, we are also looking toward new opportunities and new possibilities. That future requires continued investment in our buildings and land, our staff, and our mission so that Folklore Village can thrive tomorrow.

I believe the world needs Folklore Village right now. What we offer here is increasingly rare: authentic connections between people; opportunities to learn, create, and celebrate together; and a slower, more meaningful way of being. In a world that often feels frantic and uncertain, these things matter more than ever.

That is why our work must continue to grow. Opening Folklore Village to new communities, welcoming new participants into our shared story, and using our unique perspective to help build a healthier and more connected world is not just an aspiration; it is a responsibility.

Thank you for being part of this community, for believing in this mission, and for helping carry this remarkable place into its next chapter.

With gratitude,



Steven Rice
Executive Director, Folklore Village

FESTIVALS & SOCIALS



Festivals remain a defining part of Folklore Village's identity and a direct connection to founder Jane Farwell's vision of bringing people together through traditional music, dance, food, crafts, and seasonal celebrations. Today, our festivals continue to create opportunities for participants to actively experience cultural traditions in a welcoming community setting.

In 2025, our five festival weekends engaged **395 participants, compared to 425 participants in 2024**. While attendance was modestly lower than the previous year, participation has largely returned to pre-pandemic norms, signaling a welcome stabilization after several years of recovery and growth.

As participation patterns normalize, we are taking a thoughtful look at how festivals can continue to evolve. Opportunities exist to increase accessibility, engage new and younger audiences, strengthen connections to our educational mission, and ensure that these programs remain financially sustainable for both participants and the organization.



Saturday Socials are among Folklore Village's most enduring traditions, bringing people together through seasonal celebrations, community customs, music, dance, and shared experiences. From winter gatherings to spring, summer, and holiday festivities, these events reflect the spirit of Folklore Village's earliest programs while continuing to create meaningful opportunities for connection across generations.

In 2025, **260 people participated in seven Saturday Socials**, making them one of our most accessible and family-friendly program offerings.

FOLK SCHOOL



A Folk School at Folklore Village has long been rooted in our belief that traditional knowledge is best preserved by sharing it. Through hands-on classes in crafts, music, art, and cultural traditions, Folk School programs provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds and skill levels to learn directly from experienced instructors in a welcoming community setting.

In 2025, **60 participants engaged in Folk School workshops and classes**. While demand for lifelong learning remains strong, we are taking a thoughtful look at how Folk School offerings can be more closely integrated into Folklore Village's broader mission and programming.

Looking ahead, we see exciting opportunities to expand family-focused experiences, increase accessibility through scholarships and free programs, and develop distinctive learning opportunities that connect participants more deeply with traditional arts, culture, and community.



FOLKLIFE: YOUR LIFE



Every day at Folklore Village, our mission is to connect generations with a world of traditions. Nowhere is that mission more visible than in Folklife: Your Life, our long-running school program that introduces children to the music, dance, crafts, games, and cultural traditions that shape communities around the world. Through hands-on participation, students discover that traditions are not relics of the past, but living practices that belong to everyone and can be shared, adapted, and carried forward.

In 2025, 750 children participated in Folklife: Your Life, making it one of Folklore Village's largest and most impactful programs. For decades, thousands of students from across southern Wisconsin have experienced Folklore Village through school visits, creating lasting memories and helping build connections to cultural traditions that extend far beyond a single day on campus.

By introducing young people to diverse cultural practices in an accessible and welcoming environment, Folklife:Your Life helps ensure that traditional arts remain vibrant and relevant for future generations. Looking ahead, we see opportunities to expand our reach through additional school partnerships and off-site programming, bringing these experiences to even more children and communities.

Special thanks to the Dodgeville Kiwanis Club for their longstanding support of our school programs and their investment in the next generation of tradition bearers.

Kiwanis International
Dodgeville

BARN DANCES



Barn Dances remain one of Folklore Village's most accessible and welcoming programs, bringing together people of all ages to experience the joy of traditional community dancing. With live music, simple instruction, and an emphasis on participation rather than skill, Barn Dances offer a low-barrier entry point to the traditions that are at the heart of our mission.

In 2025, 229 people participated in seven Barn Dances. Beyond preserving a cherished cultural tradition, these events promote physical activity, social connection, and community well-being through the simple act of dancing together.

As we look ahead, Barn Dances represent a significant opportunity for growth. Their affordability, broad appeal, and strong alignment with our mission make them an ideal platform for reaching new audiences.

Special thanks to Upland Hills Health for helping support this program and its role in fostering healthy, connected communities through traditional dance.

PRAIRIES



Folklore Village's 70 acres of restored prairie are a defining feature of our 94-acre campus and a living expression of our commitment to stewardship of the land. Open to the public year-round, these native landscapes provide habitat for wildlife, opportunities for exploration, and a place to connect with the natural world.

We extend our sincere thanks to our partners at Prairie Enthusiasts, along with our dedicated volunteer burn crew and prairie stewards, whose ongoing efforts help manage invasive species, conduct prescribed burns, and keep these ecosystems healthy and thriving. As an important community resource and educational asset, our prairies will continue to play an expanding role in the Folklore Village experience for years to come.

CONCERTS

CONCERTS SERIES



Music remains one of the most effective ways Folklore Village connects people to cultural traditions and to one another. Through both public concerts and free Senior Concert programs, we bring artists and audiences together while reaching community members who may not otherwise participate in our programs.

In 2025, 231 people attended six public concerts and 168 people attended seven Senior Concert programs. Together, these offerings expanded access to cultural experiences, strengthened community connections, and helped advance our mission of fostering participation in traditional arts.

As we look ahead, opportunities exist to expand partnerships, introduce more interactive formats, and create even stronger connections between performers, audiences, and traditions.

OPEN MICS

In 2025, 173 participants engaged with Folklore Village's Open Mic programs through in-person and virtual gatherings. With attendance declining and dedicated funding concluding, Folklore Village retired Open Mic as a standalone program.

We are grateful to Michael and Mary Ann Wolkomir, whose generosity kept Open Mic free and accessible. The program's spirit of participation, creative expression, and community connection will continue through other Folklore Village offerings. Looking ahead, we see opportunities to expand informal performance and creative participation across our programs.

ASLAK LIE HOUSE



The Aslak Lie House stands as one of Folklore Village's most significant preservation projects. Originally built in 1848 by Norwegian immigrant craftsman Aslak Lie, the historic structure has been carefully reconstructed on the Folklore Village campus through the efforts of dedicated volunteers, skilled craftspeople, and generous supporters.

On June 21, 2025, Folklore Village celebrated the opening of this long-awaited project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. While volunteer work continues on final details, the future of the Aslak Lie House is clear: it will serve as a living history resource and an active part of campus programs, helping visitors connect with the stories, skills, and traditions that have shaped our region for generations.

VOLUNTEERS

Folklore Village is sustained by an extraordinary community of volunteers whose time, skills, and dedication make our work possible. In 2025, their efforts continued to strengthen Folklore Village.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many individuals and groups who give so generously of themselves, including the Schoolhouse Stewards, Aslak Lie House Volunteers, Better Gnomes and Gardeners, Prairie Restoration A-Team, and the members of the Folklore Village Infrastructure Committee, as well as many others who support our mission throughout the year. Simply put, Folklore Village could not exist without you. **In 2025, 70 volunteers contributed 2,809 hours of service**, and we remain deeply grateful for the commitment, care, and passion that our volunteers bring to this community.



FRIENDS OF FOLKLORE VILLAGE

The Friends of Folklore Village was incorporated in 1998 as a stand-alone 501(c) 3 Charitable Organization, whose purpose is to help provide financial support for Folklore Village. Resurrected in the fall of 2014, the organization pledged to sponsor several fundraising events per year.

In 2025, the Friends provided invaluable program and financial support through their annual online auction, a glorious evening praire dinner and their warm and welcoming presence at our events.

Thank you Friends!



THANK YOU, FRIENDS OF FOLKLORE VILLAGE!

President: Sarah Weier
Vice President: Lisie Kitchell
Treasurer: Lucy Richards
Secretary: Carrie Danielson
At-large Directors: Kenneth Kirkpatrick and Stina Seaberg

WAYS TO GIVE TO FOLKLORE VILLAGE

- Make a one-time gift by check, credit card, or through our online Givebutter portal
- Join our Circle of Love monthly giving program
- Underwrite a program
- Consider Folklore Village in your estate planning
- Donate shares of stock
- Check whether your employer sponsors a matching-gift program
- Conduct a Facebook birthday fundraiser for Folklore Village
- Donate to one of our Community Foundation accounts, including the Madison Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin
- Volunteer your time and/or expertise

However you choose to give, every contribution is deeply appreciated

2025 DONORS

$10,000 and up

Anonymous Donors
Cindy Schlosser and Paul Wagner

$4000-$9999

Anonymous Donors
Becky Musch
Friends of Folklore Village
Susan & Rolf Wulfsberg

$1000-$3999

Anonymous Donors
Beth Atkinson
Geoffrey Baer & Amelia Kohm
Blackbaud Giving Fund
Caterpillar Foundation
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Larry Harding
Pamela Heaney
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$500-$999

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$250-$499

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John Parejko
Leah Parkhurst & Matthew Pittman
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James Winkle & Bonnie Schmidt

$100–$249

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Ingrid Andersson
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Catherine Baer
Richard & Phyllis Baer
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Gaelyn & Daniel Beal
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Jeanette King
Esther Koblenz

2025 DONORS

$100–$249 (continued)

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Dennis West
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Under $100

Anonymous Donors
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Brenda & Tom Rossing, with Ruth Rossing, Steve Rossing, and Kevin & Heidi Baumann
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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED IN 2025

Circle of Love

Our monthly donation program



Beth Atkinson

Dick Atlee

Edwin Austin

Judith Baizan

Karen Carlson

Steward Davis

Larry Harding

Matt Hayden

DoAnn & Earl Holzman

Karen Impola

Kim & Dave Kantor

Anne Marie Kraus

Dan Lippitt & Glenn

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Notley Maddox

Louise Neu

Margaret Olsen

John Parejko

Ken Parejko

Alison Saichek

Bonnie Schmidt & James

Winkle

Eric & Penny Seaberg

Kate Stout

Maria Terrés-Sandgren

Nancy Welch

Greg Winz

Your ongoing support is the heartbeat of Folklore Village. Thank you for showing love for our mission, our history, and our future.



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED IN 2025

2025 Financial Overview

January 1–December 31, 2025

AT A GLANCE

Total revenue	**$329,862**	Total expenses	**$365,015**
Change in net assets	**($35,153)**	Total assets	**$547,948**
Total liabilities	**$8,772**	Net assets	**$539,176**

REVENUE

Contributions and grants	$173,538
Program service revenue	$112,682
Other revenue	$42,536
Investment income	$1,106
Total revenue	**$329,862**

EXPENSES

Program services	$308,827
Management and general	$55,230
Fundraising	$958
Total expenses	**$365,015**

2025 IN BRIEF

Following a year of exceptional generosity and a substantial surplus in 2024, Folklore Village reinvested in its mission in 2025 through necessary capital improvements and an autumn leadership transition that supported organisational continuity. Festival income and annual giving remained strong while returning to more typical levels, underscoring the need for continued investment. Folklore Village generated $329,862 in revenue and spent $365,015, resulting in a $35,153 deficit. Program services accounted for $308,827 of spending. The year-end balance sheet shows total assets of $628,645, compared with $657,740 in 2024. Fixed assets increased from $246,088 to $297,986, while current assets declined from $411,652 to $330,660; liabilities increased from $5,301 to $8,772.

Source: 2025 Form 990, prepared on the accrual basis. Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Where Your Support Goes

2025 income and spending at a glance

INCOME



- Contributions & grants $173,338
- Program service revenue $112,682
- Other revenue $42,536
- Investment income $1,106

Total revenue **$329,862**

SPENDING



- Program services $308,827
- Management & general $55,230
- Fundraising $958

Total expenses **$365,015**

PROGRAM SPENDING HIGHLIGHTS



$66,172	$182,609	$28,144	$10,543	$7,509
Festivals	Wages & salaries	Facilities	Folk School	Other programs

STAFF & GOVERNANCE

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Beth Atkinson - President
Bio-statistician, Mayo Clinic

Tamara Funk - Treasurer
Curator of Interpretation and Collections, Wisconsin Historical Society

Steve Pike
Retired Madison teacher, former MTI President

Bill Robichaud
Wildlife conservationist, writer, and FV Folk School instructor

Matt Hayden - Vice President
Retired businessman, executive coaching consultant; former board member and chair of eight environmental NGOs

Andrea Cool - Secretary
Senior Lecturer/Lecturer, Humanities Department, UW–Platteville

John C. Van Orman
Musician and cultural anthropology instructor, Ozarka College; FV Children's School program

Greg Winz
Emeritus research technician, UW–Madison; dance instructor and FV Folk School instructor

2025 STAFF



Steven Rice - Executive Director (Incoming)
Terri Van Orman - Executive Director (Outgoing)
Becky Rehl - Office Manager

Kelli Emerson - Program Manager
Lacie Mackintosh - Rentals Manager; Assistant Program Manager
Larry Kelly - Grounds & Maintenance (not pictured)

ADVISORY COUNCIL



Paul Dahlin, Adam Helt-Baldwin, Karen Ann Hoffman, Maria Terres, James 'Sandy' Wilson