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For Release January 2, 2013
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Milwaukee Arts Board Opens New Cycle of Public Art Conservation Fund

Three Projects Funded in Previous Cycle

The Milwaukee Arts Board is pleased to announce the opening of the fourth cycle of its fund devoted to the conservation of public art in the City of Milwaukee. The goal of the fund is to preserve that part of the city's cultural and civic heritage embodied in its public art. The fund supports the conservation of works that are of historical, cultural and aesthetic importance to the city.

When the fund reopens in January, \$5,000 will be available to conserve public art in the city. This next round of grants will be made in increments of \$1,000, with no single award greater than \$5,000. Qualifying works must be fully accessible to the public. The guidelines and application will become available at milwaukee.gov/MAB on January 2, 2013. Applications will be due January 31, 2013.

In the previous funding cycle, a total of \$9,000 was awarded for three conservation projects. The Wisconsin Humane Society received \$2,500 to clean and wax a statue of Henry Bergh, the founder of the ASPCA. The 9-foot-tall sculpture, created by American artist James Mahoney in 1891, is located at 4500 West Wisconsin Avenue and was extensively restored in 1999. It is seen by 100,000 visitors to the Humane Society each year. Lake Park Friends received \$2,500 for similar work on the bronze statue of Gen. Erastus B. Wolcott (1920) by Francis Herman Parker located in the park. The Wolcott statue is one of the few equestrian statues in the city. These two projects highlight the need for ongoing maintenance of public art at a time when the County Parks system and other civic bodies have reduced their commitments to maintaining the collection of work in public spaces. Both the Henry Bergh and Erastus Wolcott statues were extensively restored after lengthy fundraising efforts: the Bergh in 1999 and the Wolcott in 2006 after being identified as one of Diane Buck's "Dirty Dozen"—a group of important public sculptures in desperate need of conservation. However, without regular maintenance, the process of deterioration will recommence. The Public Art Subcommittee works with all grant recipients to encourage them to find sources of funding for the necessary ongoing maintenance.

The third project to receive funding was Snail's Crossing Park in Riverwest. Artist Marina Lee, working with the Riverwest Neighborhood Association and the City's Department of Recreation and Facilities, received \$4,000 to restore sections of the park that had suffered from vandalism and deterioration. Much of the matching funding was raised through grassroots efforts: artists and neighbors gathered at Lee's Riverwest studio to make ceramic tiles at a series of workshops this past summer. The park on Bremen Street is once again filled with children.

If you have questions about the application or the process, or would like to alert the Public Art Subcommittee to a piece of public art that requires conservation, contact the Arts Board at artsboard@milwaukee.gov. Please put "Public Art Conservation Fund" in the subject line.

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