

Volunteer of the Year – Northwest Wisconsin

Nannette Hendry

Spoooner Memorial Library



With a passion for teaching and sharing music, Spooner Memorial Library volunteer Nannette Hendry, provided a creative and safe outlet for the community members of Washburn County to come together and embrace community through her love of the ukulele and music.

Starting in 2019, Nan taught free multi-week ukulele classes at the library for all generations and skill levels. Each week, Nan planned a themed lesson and provided homemade cookies and giveaways to attendees. Many participants were thankful that Nan provided this free opportunity to learn an instrument, as music lessons are often out of reach financially for many local families. She provided ukuleles for anyone who did not have one and let participants take them home to practice to ensure everyone had the opportunity to participate and learn. Additionally, Nan opened up a space for intergenerational learning, as grandparents often came with their grandchildren, exposing them to both music and the library.



When the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the lessons from happening in-person, Nan approached the library director with a big idea to start an outdoor ukulele festival in Spooner. There was a shared feeling that the community was struggling with very few free activities that people could do safely.

This conversation led to months of planning and the inception of the First Annual Northwoods Ukulele Festival at Spooner Railroad Park. A long flat-bed trailer became a stage, with local ukulele groups, an elementary music teacher, and the library partnering to create a free outdoor event with workshops, concerts, and jam sessions. Over 120 people of all ages from across Washburn County and beyond attended the festival, and Nan met the community's need for togetherness during a difficult time.

Reflecting on the impacts of Nan's service, Angie Bodzislav explained that "as a Library Director, I am forever grateful for Nan's passionate resolve to bring music inside the library and into the community. On more than one occasion, community members expressed their gratitude for Nan's generosity in not only offering free music sessions, but also in her generosity of giving at each program she offered. We already have the Second Annual Northwoods Ukulele Festival on the calendar."

