

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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FIREFLY CENTER FOR ART & WELLBEING AWARDED GRANT TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

March 31, 2023 (Bemidji, MN) – The Firefly Center for Art & Wellbeing has been awarded \$200,000 by the Otto Bremer Trust in St. Paul.

The Firefly Center for Art & Wellbeing, in Fosston, will boost rural access to critically needed mental health services in an unbiased, creative, and welcoming environment that fosters community, inclusion, and equality.

The Firefly Center for Art & Wellbeing, a component fund of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, is a mixed-use center that will provide mental health services, art therapy, space for creatives and community groups, and offer three residential units in response to a rural housing shortage. The grant funding from the OBT will be used to assist in the physical buildout and renovation of the Center.

An integral part of the project is the Center's partnership with Alluma. Alluma is committed to partnering with the Firefly Center to expand access to mental health services in Fosston and east Polk County. This partnership utilizes a new model for mental health service delivery that combines the arts with mental wellbeing to create a more inclusive and destigmatized environment for all those seeking care and boosting rural access to critically needed mental health services in a creative and comprehensive environment.

The Firefly Center for Art & Wellbeing will be a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. The 12-member board of directors includes volunteers who represent, in part, the following: the arts, mental health services, financial, housing, and those who have had lived experience with regard to mental health.

The Center will continue to seek grant funding for this important community project. Funding from individuals, businesses or corporate donors is also welcomed. Local funding will provide the Center with support to meet and expand the services in the community.

Questions about the Firefly Center for Art & Wellbeing may be directed to Heidi Danos, 818-325-5053; Bonnie Stewart, 218-280-9176; or Barbara Johnson, 218-230-4119.

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