

STANDING TOGETHER



News For Friends And Champions

Winter 2024 ▶▶▶

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A Message
from
Tanya Atkinson

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"Elizah Leonard" (from Strong Unrelenting Spirits series), archival digital print with glass beads by Wisconsin Artist Tom Jones (2019)



Dear amazing friends,

As we embark on a new year filled with promise and possibility – and let’s be frank, more challenging times – I take a moment to reflect upon some incredible achievements of the past year in service to the Planned Parenthood mission: the restoration of abortion care in our state, the launch of vasectomy care, the implementation of PEP and PrEP oral therapies, and the extension of gender affirming hormone therapy throughout the state. These critical services, essential to health and well-being, are possible because of your steadfast support – thank you.

Art as Advocate, Healer

Another area that brings me constant pride and inspiration is Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin’s steadfast commitment as both believer in and supporter of the arts. After all, art in its many forms and expressions has been at the forefront of social and political change for millennia.

Art serves as a powerful healing modality. Think about the instant calm or joy hearing your favorite song can elicit. Think about those times when the written word or getting lost in a painting has been a needed support and refuge. When art is purposeful, it is powerful – especially in its ability to heal, spark hope, provide solace, and instill a sense of belonging.

Forward Art Initiative Comes to Water Street

To that end, and as part of the final element of the Water Street health care center build-out outlined within the Be Visible capital campaign, the walls are now dedicated to more than 70 art pieces from 28 Wisconsin artists, many of

whom have relied upon Planned Parenthood’s health care to pursue their passion as artists. The collection in its entirety is especially powerful, as the team at the Water Street health center was involved in every decision so that patients and staff were both celebrated and honored – a testament to the transformative power of art in Planned Parenthood’s healing spaces.

I encourage you to “tour” the collection via the QR code found on page 5 in this newsletter. You’ll be able to enjoy the entire collection and hear from artists why having their art at the Water Street health center is so important. Like artist Tayla Hart:

“My artwork at Water Street aims to immerse viewers in a shared exploration of the human experience. By embracing a spectrum of emotions, it offers solace and celebration amidst the anxiety often associated with personal challenges and medical settings. Inspired by my own journey navigating the complexities of women’s health care, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin holds a special place in my heart, and I am grateful for their support in my care and now support in providing a platform for my voice. I am honored to give back through my art. I aspire to provide comfort to viewers, echoing Planned Parenthood’s ethos of fostering understanding, empowerment, and resilience.”

Reflecting upon the collection, I’m especially proud of the staff, ensuring that every kind of body was represented in the art, so that wherever someone may be on their life’s journey, the art is there as a gentle reminder saying, “I see you. You matter.”

The Opportunity to Create in 2024

As we face a tumultuous year, with Wisconsin at the epicenter of national events, let us recognize the artists within us all. Each of you is the creator of your own masterpiece, a unique narrative waiting to be shared with the world. What artistry can you bring forth to serve as a healing modality in these challenging times? Is it the art of a comforting hug, the art of a sincere smile, the art of a handwritten note, or perhaps sharing your favorite song or playlist?

In the canvas of your own life, consider the masterpiece you are especially proud of and be inspired to share it with the world this year. Amidst the chaos of an election year, let us collectively co-create a healing narrative – one that embodies the art of compassion, understanding, and unity.

Thank you, from the depths of my heart, for being part of this incredible journey. Your support, your stories, and your artistry make Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin a beacon of hope, compassion, and love.

With boundless gratitude and a heart full of love, I see you – you matter,

Tanya Atkinson, President & CEO

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on Facebook and LinkedIn**

Get ready to...

mingle
PPWI'S SIGNATURE SOIRÉE

VERB

- 1. to bring or mix together**
- 2. to take part in social activities**

Mark your calendar!

Appleton: 05.09.2024
Fox Cities Exhibition Center

Madison: 05.16.2024
The Sylvee

Milwaukee: 06.05.2024
The Pritzlaff

Stay tuned for more details!

**Heart
Heart**

A PPWI Playlist

DJ DRIPSweat captures the artistry of the playlist in her latest PPWI curation which includes Wisconsin musicians Chris Crain, SistaStrings (on tour with Brandi Carlisle and performed at a past PPWI annual event!) and Liam O'Brien. DRIPSweat shares these thoughts:

As I reflect on the healing powers of art; welcoming genuine intuition in creating beautiful pieces & tapping into sacred connections that we share, I understand that music is a big part of that allowance - I accept my roles to curate playlists through my own artistry. Please enjoy my contribution <3

Social links:

@djdripsweat: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat
@djdripsweat: Twitch, Soundcloud, Mixcloud

One Day – Chris Crain

Show Me Your Soul – Lalah Hathaway, Robert Glasper

Move Love – Robert Glasper, We Are KING

Strength Courage & Wisdom – India.Arie

FIND YOUR WAY BACK – Beyoncé

Beauty Speaks & Interlude – Chantae Cann

Shine – Cleo Sol

Don't Disturb This Groove – Meshell Ndegeocello

Hynosis – Raveena

Era III. – Chromonicc

Under City Lights Interlude
– @Homies, Aiyana Echols, NoGuru

Son Shine – SEault

Her Name Was – SistaStrings

Nightflyer – Allison Russell

Nowhere to Go – Liam O'Brien's Faithless Followers

Healing – FLETCHER

Listen on Spotify:



Breaking Abortion Access News:

While this newsletter was being printed, lawmakers in Wisconsin passed a new assembly bill to ban abortion after 14 weeks.

Lawmakers in Wisconsin swiftly passed a new assembly bill to ban abortions after 14 weeks.

The introduction of the bill came days before what should have been the 51st Anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The bill, proposed on January 19 and approved on January 23, aims to add a more restrictive ban as a referendum to the April election ballot.

Governor Evers has firmly stated his opposition to the ban, asserting that Wisconsinites should make their reproductive healthcare decisions without political interference. He vowed to veto any bill limiting access to reproductive health care. Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin commended the governor for supporting reproductive care access.

Although Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin reinstated abortion care services in Milwaukee and Madison in September and in Sheboygan in December, abortion access in this state is still extremely restrictive.

This 14-week ban threatens the health, lives, and freedoms of Wisconsinites. Please keep using your voice protect and expand access to this essential health care.



Personal Memoirs – Pathways to Healing

Author Judith Ford shares her thoughts on writing, healing, & reproductive rights

In a recent interview, Judith Ford – a prolific writer and retired psychotherapist – discussed the intricacies of her life journey and the process of writing as a way to heal past traumas.

From the short stories she began to craft in fifth grade to the publication of her latest book, "Fever of Unknown Origin," Ford's literary journey has been marked by the exploration of dark themes from life such as loss, illness, and death. PPWI connected with Ford when she shared her poignant short story *Green Scarf* – a fictionalized true story about the trauma and anxiety of seeking an illegal abortion in the pre-Roe 1960s.

Abortion Stories from the Past

The narrative of *Green Scarf* sheds light on the emotional and physical toll of Ford's own personal experience and paints a vivid picture of what women must endure to obtain an abortion when reproductive rights are restricted – a place where (surreally) we find ourselves again in many states across the US.

Judith shared the events from her own life that inspired her to write *Green Scarf*, "I was 21, it was 1969. I had asked for birth control from my family doctor – *which was a big mistake* because he was

very shaming and angry at me for even thinking about sex. He sent me away feeling terrible – and with no birth control – I was pregnant within a couple of months. At the time, I was living in Milwaukee and had a low-wage job. I had no money, no support, and was unable to get abortion care legally.

"I finally got a contact to see someone in Chicago. So that's what I did, which was a terrifying thing to do, not knowing who this person was, or if it was even safe. But I went, and I had the abortion. Fortunately, the people were kind and skilled – and I was okay.

"I think the trauma of it all was based on a number of things. I never doubted my decision to have an abortion. I was grateful and relieved after it was over; but the actual experience of not being able to get care legally and close to home was very scary – and also physically painful. I had no support network to lean on. I didn't know about Planned Parenthood at that point. I wish I had; that would have made a huge difference."

The Need to Share Post-Roe

Since Roe was overturned in June of 2022, many see abortion access becoming further restricted – and Ford emphasized the importance of sharing "*Green Scarf*" – to illustrate what can happen when access to abortion is unavailable. Breaking the silence and lifting the veil of shame, she believes, is crucial for emotional healing and reducing the stigma surrounding reproductive choices. Her hope is that "*Green Scarf*" serves as a timely reminder of the need for having access to care and the importance of supporting organizations like Planned Parenthood.

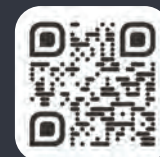


"She would have been more scared if she hadn't resigned herself to the likelihood of her death. There was a strange empty peacefulness in that. Like Novocain. It had made it possible for her to get up that morning, get dressed, and keep moving into whatever would be.

"Like bungee jumping, she supposed. Or skydiving. You travel to the highest point. You close your eyes and you jump. Falling, you have no more choices."

~ An excerpt from "*Green Scarf*" by Judith Ford
Originally published by North Dakota Quarterly

Scan the code to read
Ford's short story "*Green Scarf*"
and to hear it read by the author.



Judith Ford worked as a psychotherapist in private practice for 37 years before retiring and moving with her husband and two dogs to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her fiction, essays, and poetry have appeared in literary journals, including *Quarter After Eight*, *Southern Humanities*, *Lullwater Review*, *Evening Street Review*, and many others.

She has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes, in nonfiction, in fiction and in poetry. In 2005 she won the Willow Review Prose Award and in 2008 her series of haiku poems won “most highly commended” in the Margaret Reid Poetry Contest. Her essay “Go Go Go, Said the Bird” was nominated for Best of the Web 2023. She has taught creative writing to sixth graders in a private school, adults at the University of Wisconsin Extension, and teenagers staying in a runaway shelter. She earned an MFA in writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2016. She currently enjoys hikes in the Santa Fe foothills, learning to play the piano, and training her singing voice.



Scan the code to visit judithford.com to learn more about Judith and her most recent book, *Fever of Unknown Origin*.



Writing as Therapy

Having a career as a psychotherapist, Ford acknowledges that her therapeutic background, combined with her personal experiences, have enabled her to cultivate self-understanding and kindness toward herself. The integration of psychological insights into her narratives adds depth and authenticity to her work.

Her body of work spans poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, with a particular fondness for the nonfiction memoir genre. The process of writing for Ford has been a transformative tool, offering her a sense of agency and

understanding in her own life journey. It has provided her with the opportunity to reflect on her past, recognize personal growth, and cultivate empathy for her younger self.

Her latest book “Fever of Unknown Origin” and an earlier essay titled “The Smell of Blood,” are among her personal favorites. These works showcase not only Ford’s literary prowess but also offer readers a glimpse into her profound and varied life experiences. Reflecting on her own experiences, she acknowledges the emotional challenges of revisiting traumatic events but highlights the cathartic and therapeutic nature of the process and the intersection of art and healing.

Wisconsin Abortion Access Update

Where we’ve been:

On June 24, 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending a federal constitutional right to abortion access – returning abortion laws to individual states. In Wisconsin, the legal uncertainty surrounding a 19th century law forced abortion providers to suspend care within the state. Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul immediately challenged the enforceability of the law. Following a ruling in the Attorney General’s lawsuit, and after 449 days without access in Wisconsin, on September 18, 2023, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin resumed abortion services in Milwaukee and Madison. In December, abortion services resumed in Sheboygan. The court’s ruling found that the 1849 law does not apply to consensual medical abortion.

Where we’re at today:¹

Despite the fact that the majority of Wisconsinites support legal abortion in all or most cases², Sheboygan County District Attorney Joel Urmanski formally appealed the Dane County Circuit Court decision on December 20, 2023. In his request for appeal, he asked for the issue to be heard by the Waukesha-based 2nd District Court of Appeals; however, he did publicly state that he intends to seek a bypass to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is closely following the case as it makes its way through the courts.

¹ Information current as of 1/15/2024

² Marquette University Law School Poll, September 2022

FORWARD

Art Initiative

– Bridging Health Care, Artistic Expression, & Patient Empowerment

The Forward Art Initiative, established through Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin's (PPWI) Be Visible capital campaign, transcends the boundaries of health care to embrace community empowerment and artistic expression. Designed and led by acclaimed artist Niki Johnson, this unique initiative seeks to redefine the relationship between health centers and their communities, by amplifying the voices of Wisconsin artists from diverse backgrounds and PPWI health center staff who provide vital care.

Niki Johnson: A Leader in Art & Advocacy

The collaboration between Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and Niki Johnson brings a visionary perspective to the intersection of health care and

At left: a cropped photo of the artwork "Hills and Valleys", an 8 x 8-foot masterpiece, carefully crafted by Johnson using pieces of PPWI signs from five Wisconsin health centers closed in 2013 due to defunding by the Walker administration. The artwork, depicting a woman's torso with a "vajazzled" Capitol Building, is a statement on the politicization of women's reproductive rights.



artistic expression. Johnson, recipient of PPWI's 2016 Voices Award, utilizes her art as a tool for advocacy. "Hills & Valleys," unveiled at PPWI's 80th Anniversary Celebration, stands as a powerful symbol of Johnson's commitment to reproductive rights. Now with the Forward Art Initiative Johnson's aim is to "provide a platform for PPWI and Wisconsin artists to join forces so they may empower, uplift, comfort, and inspire all who seek care."

The Transformative Power of Art

"Art has the power to inspire, empower, and heal. These values are embraced deeply in the care provided in Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin health centers, and we are looking to the power of art to enhance the patient experience," said PPWI CEO Tanya Atkinson. Acknowledging art as a healing modality, the Forward Art Initiative serves to enhance PPWI's holistic community-centered approach to health care.

Through the Forward Art Initiative, PPWI plans to incorporate Wisconsin art in health centers statewide. This roll out will take place gradually, one health center at a time, and will be shaped by staff guidance at each location. This deliberate approach ensures health center staff maintain a pivotal role in selecting artwork for their location, articulating the needs of their patients and community, so the art is reflective of whom they serve.



On the Cover: "Elizah Leonard" by Wisconsin Artist Tom Jones (2019) – a featured work from the Forward Art Initiative

Artist's Statement:

"This current work is rooted in Ho-Chunk identity. For the past twenty-five years, I have been working on an ongoing photographic series on the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin. First and foremost, I am ever mindful of my responsibility to my tribe and want to carry on a sense of pride about who and what we are as a people. Through the use of portraiture, I am giving both the tribe and the outside world a perspective from someone who comes from within the Ho-Chunk community.

"As a child, I went with my mother to see the Sioux medicine man Robert Stead on the Rosebud reservation. We sat on the

Water Street Health Center - Milwaukee

Located in Milwaukee's Harbor District, Water Street is one of three PPWI centers to provide abortion care. The artwork chosen adds to the visual aesthetics of the space, while uplifting and empowering those who seek care. By infusing creative energy into health centers, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin honors the healing power of art, creating a welcoming and inspiring environment for patients and their communities.

The choice of "Forward" as the symbol for this initiative draws inspiration from the statue standing boldly in front of Wisconsin's State Capitol building. Much like the symbol suggests, the Forward Art Initiative embodies progress – strong, confident, and always moving forward.

Experience Forward Art – Virtually

As the patient experience and privacy are paramount to Planned Parenthood's mission of providing exceptional care, supporters are invited to experience the Forward Art Initiative via virtual platforms. PPWI plans to offer various multimedia experiences of the Initiative throughout the year.

Currently readers can scan this code to explore the Forward Art Initiative website. Here, you can view the artwork chosen for installation at the Water Street Health Center and read the artists' statements and bios.



floor along the walls with many other people. When the lights were turned off, the women started to sing. They were asking for the spirits to come in; it was at this time that small orbs of light began to float around the room.

"I have visually incorporated this experience through beaded Ho-Chunk floral designs directly onto the photograph, in order to give a symbolic representation of our ancestors who are constantly watching over us and to present the pride, strength and beauty of my people. I am interested in broadening the conversation of portraiture in mainstream art and to present a nation that is generally unseen in popular culture."

Editor Note: Jones received an Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition award from the National Portrait Gallery for this piece in 2022. "Elizah Leonard" is an archival digital print embellished with glass beads. The portrait features Elizah Leonard, a student, wrestler, dancer, and member of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Artists

Following is the list of artists whose work is on display at the Water Street Health Center. We will be highlighting select individual works in future issues of this newsletter.

Paige Bauske
Lois Bielefeld
Kimberly Burnett
Angelica Contreras
Celeste Contreras
Courtney Cosgriff
Jamal Currie
Nova Czarnecki
Abigail Engstrand
Kaitlin Esche-Lyon
Cat Gilbert
Jessica Gutierrez
Tayla Hart
Max Hautala
Kristine Hinrichs
Tom Jones
Mariah Tate Klemens
Stephanie Krellwitz
Vaughan Larsen
Maureen Mercier
Poornima Moorthy
Adjua Nsoroma
Ras Ammar Nsoroma
Rosy Petri
Francesca Simonite
Carissa Sosnowski
Evelyn Terry
Jimmy Zenisek



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issue!
Tanya

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