

*For Immediate Release: 11.30.07*

*Contact:*

*Sharon Wagner  
Talent Shop Manager / 241-9454*

“It is with great pleasure that I am able to announce that the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin has approved the formation of a fund which will enable the Talent Shop to continue its operation and transition to a self sufficient, independent entity,” states Kerry Karnitz, Talent Shop board of directors member.

The Talent Shop is a nonprofit program and retail shop featuring items handcrafted by local, retired adults and has been a community icon for 40 years. Over 200 area senior/adult individuals participate in the program and their work is supported by 30 volunteers, primarily servicing the retail operation. In addition, a part time manager and assistant have handled the administrative details of the operation.

The Talent Shop is extremely grateful to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc. for their unwavering support over the past 15 years. “They began with a three-year commitment which has since been extended 5-fold. They have been so supportive of this particular community effort and have filled significant financial gaps that have occurred over the years. It is now time for us to turn a new page and stand on our own. In doing so we will be seeking alternate sources of funding in the future,” states Sharon Wagner, Talent Shop manager.

“Since the recent media coverage about the Talent Shop’s uncertain future, the support from our community has been overwhelming. There has been an incredible outpouring of support through both patronage of the store and inquiries regarding financial contributions to the Talent Shop,” states Wagner. “We will be pursuing new avenues of fundraising in the future, building upon our past success, and strengthening our reach across the community.”

In addition, Lutheran Social Services will be working closely with the Talent Shop through the designated transition period, which will end February 29, 2008, to ensure that all administrative and operational activities are effectively transferred to us internally. “We really appreciate all that Lutheran Social Services has done for us and the number of lives they have positively influenced in the Wausau area through the Talent Shop partnership,” states Karnitz.

- M O R E -

The new Talent Shop Fund that has been established within the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin will enable financial contributions to be made in support of the Talent Shop, allowing donors to receive a charitable deduction for their gift. "This is instrumental for us to be able to become self sufficient and work toward building a longer term endowment that will ensure that the Talent Shop is here for many generations to come," states Mr. Karnitz.

Jean Tehan, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin states, "Our work with The Talent Shop is consistent with our mission, as the Talent Shop has enriched the lives of many and is a very important part of our community as a whole. As a unique community resource, the Community Foundation has the flexibility to address a variety of issues that face our local communities. Developing creative solutions that bring the necessary resources to the table and acting as a catalyst are defining characteristics of a community foundation. We are happy to be able to help."

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Anyone interested in contributing to the Talent Shop may do so in two ways:

1. Send a check payable to:

*Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin  
500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street- Suite 310; Wausau, WI 54403*

Note in memo portion of check: *-Talent Shop Fund*

2. Online-- [www.cfncw.org](http://www.cfncw.org) (click on the Piggy Bank and scroll alphabetically to the Talent Shop Fund)

Inquiries about donations: contact the Community Foundation at 715-845-9555

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Contacts:

Sharon Wagner, Talent Shop Manager / 845-1961 or 241-9454

Kerry Karnitz, The Talent Shop Board Member / 845-7306

Ted Hakala, Vice President, Lutheran Social Services / 715-552-2420

Jean Tehan, Executive Director, Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin / 845-9555

The Talent Shop / 217 Scott Street / Wausau, WI 54403