

AAUW sincerely appreciates support for the John Noltner residency from The Beaver Dam Community Foundation, Moraine Park Technical College, Marion Wild Slovak, Beaver Dam Community Library, WBEV/Good Karma Brand, Beaver Dam High School, Wayland Academy, Rotary Club of Beaver Dam, Beaver Dam Noon Kiwanis.

A DONATION APPEAL FOR AAUW'S COMMUNITY-WIDE "BELONGING: UNITY IN COMMUNITY" RESIDENCY IN BEAVER DAM.

The Beaver Dam AAUW is providing a unique week-long residency, "Belonging: Unity in Community," in Beaver Dam, featuring internationally recognized author, photojournalist, and peace advocate, John Noltner, who is originally from Beaver Dam (photo below). From September 14 through September 20, 2025. John will offer a variety of programs and photo/interview sessions at about ten community sites, cross-generational, from students to seniors. The committee has a commitment of \$10,000 from pledges and donations and welcomes contributions to help fulfill the \$15,000 budget. To contribute or for more information, email Committee Chair Annette Kamps at annette71363@gmail.com.



News release

03/05/2025

Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation Supports John Noltner Residency

The AAUW (American Association of University Women), Beaver Dam branch, has received a \$1,000 grant award from the Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation in support of its week-long community-wide residency program, featuring award-winning photo journalist, author, and peace advocate, John Noltner. During the Beaver Dam residency, September 14, through September 20, 2025, at least ten community entities, schools and other civic organizations, will experience a variety of programming, including classes, workshops, lectures, and exhibits. There will be opportunities for the general public to attend Noltner's gallery exhibit at the Dodge County Arts Center, to enroll in several portrait and interview sessions, and to attend a culminating presentation at the BDACT Fine Arts Center. Annette Kamps, Chair of the AAUW's "Unity in Community" committee that is facilitating the residency, said, "This unique, wide-ranging project is only possible because of support by community organizations like the Foundation. It is especially exciting that we will be celebrating John Noltner, a highly recognized writer/photographer who has dedicated his profession toward peace and good will and whose roots are in Beaver Dam."

Noltner, a Beaver Dam High School graduate, has traveled 90,000 miles across the country, gathering portraits and personal stories to "bridge divides and encourage dialogue." He has collected stories of human courage, grace, and resilience across four continents and produced four books reflecting those journeys. His photographs have been published in multiple outlets, including Forbes Magazine, National Geographic, Smithsonian, and Reader's Digest. The University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin hold his work in their permanent collections. His "A Peace of My Mind" photographs has been exhibited at the Nobel Peace Prize forum and has been widely shown throughout the U.S. In preparation for the Noltner residency, AAUW and the Beaver Dam Community Library will continue its annual collaborative community summer read to feature Noltner's books, including his most recent award-winning book, "Lessons on the Road to Peace."

In addition to the Foundation's grant award, the project is receiving fiscal support from several participating entities and civic organizations. Additional support is welcome. For contact information, see <https://beaverdam-wi.aauw.net/contact-us>. To learn more about John Noltner, see <https://apeaceofmymind.org/about>



Tom Heffron, Advisory Board President of the Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation, presented a grant award of \$1,000 to the AAUW, Beaver Dam branch, in support of its upcoming community-wide residency featuring nationally recognized photographer, journalist, and author, John Noltner, a Beaver Dam native. (L. to R.) Andrea Utrie, AAUW Vice-President; Annette Kamps, committee chair, and Robin Hanson, committee member

"BELONGING: UNITY IN COMMUNITY"
***A community-wide residency in Beaver
Dam by nationally recognized award-
winning photo-journalist, author, and
Beaver Dam native JOHN NOLTNER***

September 14 through September 20, 2025

PROGRAMMING

SUNDAY: John Noltner's photo gallery exhibit set up at the Dodge County Arts Center

SUNDAY EVENING: A preview of the exhibit, including Noltner's commentary, for residency participants and community representatives. (*General public viewing will be available throughout the week.*)

MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY: Scheduled programming (classes, workshops, *portrait/interview sessions and more) as requested by school and community residency participants, including, to date:

Art on the Town (*Hands-on studio owned and managed by BDMS art teacher, Kris Schumer-Rasmussen*)
BD ACT Fine Arts Center (*Owned and managed by Beaver Dam Area Community Theatre*)
Beaver Dam Area Chamber of Commerce
Beaver Dam
Community Library
Beaver Dam High School
Dodge County Center for the Arts (*Owned and managed by the Beaver Dam Area Arts Association*) Moraine Park Technical College
Playground Movement (*Laura Goral, Leader*)
Wayland Academy
WBEV Radio/Good Karma Production
Watermark (*Park & Recreation Center*)
And the General Public

FRIDAY: No public scheduling. Reserved for Noltner's production of a *video featuring local interviews and portraits, to be included in his closing keynote presentation on Saturday evening.

SATURDAY MORNING AND EARLY AFTERNOON: Several sessions for the general community (such as “meet the author,” book signings, workshops, discussions, etc.) at public sites. For example: Beaver Dam Community Library, Art on the Town, Dodge County Arts Center.

SATURDAY EVENING: *Open to the public* – A closing keynote presentation (including the *video of local interviews and portraits) by Noltner at the Kamps auditorium, BDACT Fine Arts Center. (* Portrait/Interview sessions are opportunities for individuals to pose for a professional photo and to offer their insights about “peace” and “belonging” in their community. Several sessions at community sites will be open to the public.)

An AAUW “Unity in Community” Project

The Beaver Dam AAUW believes that, no matter what the population, hatred and violence in its many forms needs to be addressed within a positive, intentional environment. To that cause, within the last three years, AAUW “Unity in Community” committee has implemented a successful annual community summer read program in collaboration with the Beaver Dam Community Library. That program has included a culminating public forum featuring authors and/or panelists to facilitate community dialogue. Each year, participation in the read project has expanded its outreach. In 2025, the residency by photo/journalist/author will be even more inclusive as AAUW implements programming that will provide cross-generational opportunities throughout the community.

Project Support: To date, to help support residency, promotion, and other budget costs, AAUW has received a grant from the Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation, and support in the form of pledges and donations from BDHS, WBEV, Wayland Academy, MPTC, and the Beaver Dam Community Library. In addition, several residency participants are offering in-kind help. AAUW is pursuing additional fiscal awards to fulfill the \$14,000 residency budget.

(A summary from Noltner’s web site)



***“In a world that asks us to focus on the things that can separate us,
A Peace of My Mind invites us to explore the common humanity
that connects us.”***

– John Noltner, founder, A Peace of My Mind

A Peace of My Mind is a multimedia arts project, created by award-winning photographer John Noltner, that uses portraits and personal stories to bridge divides and encourage dialogue around important issues. A gifted storyteller, Noltner has worked on four continents, gathering stories of human courage, grace, and resilience.

His project reflects his belief that art and storytelling can help individuals, organizations and communities articulate their deepest values and encourage action toward building social capital and community connections.

PROGRAMMING – Through exhibits, workshops, lectures, on-site studios, artist residencies, and distance learning, “A Peace of My Mind” leads transformative experiences that help a polarized world rediscover the common humanity that connects us.

Exhibits – Compelling portraits and inspiring personal stories from people of diverse backgrounds.

Keynote lecture - A multi-media keynote presentation shares John’s own story of following his passion, while at the same time revealing the wisdom of everyday Americans and their stories of hope, transformation and forgiveness.

Gallery tours - Learn in depth how the portraits were made, how the artist connected with the individuals, and uncover more of the themes that were raised in the stories.

Guided dialogue and panel discussions - John Noltner can lead panel discussions on a range of topics relevant to the social climate today.

Story Gathering/ Writing workshops - From one-hour “flash writing” exercises to in depth, full-day workshops, writing can help explore and clarify ideas that have not been fully articulated in the past.

Facilitated story gathering – To help participants gather stories from their own circles to create parallel projects.

Guest Lecturer for Classroom Visits

On-site studios – Capturing portraits and stories from your own community in a unique and interactive event. May be produced into a video and incorporated into a closing keynote talk.

About John Noltner: John Noltner is originally from Beaver Dam, WI, and a Beaver Dam High School graduate. He resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he works as a freelance photographer. He received a BA degree in Communication and Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Noltner’s work and subject matter is varied, ranging from small town America to overseas projects. He has produced projects for national magazines, Fortune 500 companies, and non-profit organizations. His photographs have been published in multiple outlets including Forbes Magazine, National Geographic, Smithsonian, and Reader’s Digest. The University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin hold his work in their permanent collections. Noltner is perhaps best known for a multimedia art project known as “A Peace of My Mind.” The project combines photographs of diverse people and their commentaries on the meaning of peace. It has been exhibited at the Nobel Peace Prize forum and has gained support from the Minnesota State Arts Board. The exhibit has been widely shown at community centers, private galleries, universities and libraries.

Photo/journal books by John Noltner - “Portraits of Peace,” “A Peace of My Mind,” “Lessons on the Road to Peace.”

