

TO THE CANNON FALLS FINANCE COMMITTEE:

The Cannon Valley Senior Center is a community resource that plays a key role by offering programs and services that range from social and educational activities to health and fitness. We also strive to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of older adults. We are proud to play a vital and important role in enhancing the lives of seniors who would not have these opportunities if it were not for the CVSC. Our motto is "Seniors Serving Seniors Serving the Community."

The CVSC is a warm and inviting place where seniors can take advantage of our programs, combat loneliness, and form new friendships. We are proud to sponsor a singing group, community band, arts, crafts, educational classes, quilting, Days for Girls program where seniors make dresses for girls in Third-World countries, a "Book Buddies" program where seniors read to elementary students, a monthly lunch group, coffee hour, a birding group, cards and Scrabble and seasonal parties just to name a few. We also sponsor day and cross country trips. Other offerings are bowling, softball and pickleball played in the gym. The attached sheet lists all of our programs.

In the fall we rent golf carts and take seniors down the Cannon Valley Trail who cannot do it on their own, followed by a picnic lunch. For many years we sponsored the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner held at St. Pius where we provided, cooked, served on site and delivered meals to shut in's, serving almost 200 meals. We also sponsor a program honoring community veterans once a year and an annual boutique which funds a scholarship for a graduating senior. Our volunteers spend many hours helping make the lives of others better through the programs we offer and we give more than we receive. Lora Bremer, our director, is the core of our operation. She puts her heart and soul into everything that she does. As you can see, our programs make a difference in the lives of community seniors, many of whom would be forgotten and lonely.

As a nonprofit, we rely on multiple funding sources. We initiated membership dues last year to replace the \$4,000 received annually from Family Fare's receipts program which ended. Our Finance Committee is always looking for funding ideas and for grants. Unfortunately, we have discovered that the majority of MN grants are only for nonprofits in the Seven-County metro area or for specific purposes for which we don't qualify. We are in contact with state representatives and U.S. senators for grants. To raise money, we hold a yearly concert, man the gates for the fair board, receive a small take from trips, and ask for contributions from local residents and businesses.

Now, here's our dilemma. For 30 years, the Cannon Falls School District has graciously let us their space in the old elementary school without paying rent. They have now asked us to begin paying rent in the amount of \$1,000 a month on July 1. There are only two senior centers in the State of Minnesota subsidized by school districts, Cannon Falls and Hastings. The rest are mostly funded by local municipal tax dollars. There are some exceptions such as Northfield which has a large membership and is self-operated. Nationwide, statistics show that in most communities across the U.S., senior centers are funded by local municipal governments who may also allocate budget for staff salaries, facility costs, and programs. We are grateful that each year the City of Cannon Falls has given us \$5,000 which has been a tremendous help to our budget. Because our year-end budget is already tight, we have no choice but to ask the city for help with the rent so the CVSC can continue its important work and remain a viable asset to the community.

Thank you and we hope you will take our request under consideration as it would be a devastating loss to the community to lose this valuable resource.

Finance Committee
Cannon Valley Senior Center