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**Marquette, WARF announce 2021 ‘Force for Positive Change’ winners**

*Winners were announced live during the virtual event on April 7*

MILWAUKEE — Marquette University and the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) have announced the winners of the 2021 Force for Positive Change awards. This year’s awards were the fourth time this statewide competition recognized social entrepreneurship as a model for solving social or environmental challenges in a way that is sustainable, just and generates impactful change in Wisconsin. A total of $83,000 in prize money was awarded to 20 organizations.

“This year’s applicants took the competition to a new level. We are thrilled that such high caliber social enterprises, both for-profit and nonprofit, throughout Wisconsin are creating so much impact to benefit our state,” noted event co-producer Laura Heisler from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

This year’s seven winners, each receiving a cash prize of $10,000, were:

From Custer, Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA)

From Eau Claire, Earthbound Environmental Solutions LLC

From Fitchburg, Little John’s Kitchens

From Madison, CEOs of Tomorrow

From Milwaukee, Islands of Brilliance and Public Allies

From Spring Valley, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service

In addition, the following organizations received honorable mentions and a $1,000 cash prize:

Bloom360 Learning Community, East Troy

Build-A-Bow, Racine

Common Wealth Development, Madison

Fifth Season Cooperative, Viroqua

Giant Jones Brewing LLC, Madison

Harambee Village Doulas, Madison

Madison-area Urban Ministry dba Just Dane, Madison

Maydm, Madison

New-Life Community Development, Milwaukee

New Leaf Foods Inc., Green Bay

Operation Fresh Start, Madison

Riveredge Nature Center, Saukville

Rosenholm Dairy LLP, Cochrane

The winners were selected from 174 initial applications that were then narrowed to 20 finalists by an expert panel of judges from industry, academia and the nonprofit sector.

Award winners were announced at the end of the virtual [Force for Positive Change event](https://www.warf.org/through-programs-and-events/for-inventors-entrepreneurs-and-researchers/force-for-positive-change/force-for-positive-change.cmsx). The event featured a keynote from internationally renowned journalist and social entrepreneur David Bornstein, speakers from for-profit and nonprofit organizations across Wisconsin, and a discussion between philanthropists John and Tashia Morgridge and WEDC Secretary Missy Hughes. The program also included special topic sessions focused on pandemic pivots, rural revitalization and racial equity.

“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations remain incredibly committed to creating social impact in Wisconsin. Holding a virtual event gave us the opportunity to still celebrate social entrepreneurship statewide and highlight standouts that contributed to rural resiliency, racial equity, and remarkable pivots during the pandemic,” remarked Kelsey Otero of Marquette, co-producer of this year’s event.

Marquette University and WARF spearheaded the competition, in conjunction with John and Tashia Morgridge, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, American Family Insurance, Promega, Cardinal Stritch University, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Ashoka, gener8tor, University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Discovery 2 Product and Division of Continuing Studies, and Wisconsin Microfinance.

For more information visit [warf.org/PositiveChange](https://www.warf.org/through-programs-and-events/for-inventors-entrepreneurs-and-researchers/force-for-positive-change/force-for-positive-change.cmsx).

Contact Heisler at (608) 316-4392 or Otero at (414) 288-4990 with questions.

*The Force for Positive Change Award Competition is sponsored by Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation and Marquette University. Entries were accepted from November 2, 2020 through January 19, 2021 . Entries were judged by a panel of judges selected by the sponsors. The odds of winning depend on the number and quality of entries received. No purchase necessary to enter. Void where prohibited. For full official rules visit* [*warf.org/PositiveChange*](https://www.warf.org/through-programs-and-events/for-inventors-entrepreneurs-and-researchers/force-for-positive-change/force-for-positive-change.cmsx)*.*

**About WARF**

The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) helps steward the cycle of research, discovery, commercialization and investment for the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Founded in 1925 as an independent, nonprofit foundation, WARF manages more than 2,000 patents and an investment portfolio as it funds university research, obtains patents for campus discoveries and licenses inventions to industry. For more information, visit [warf.org](http://warf.org).

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