



SAVE OUR STORIES





For nearly 50 years, the Marigold Museum has been one of Appleton's most treasured cultural spaces - a museum that listens. A museum that dares to ask: Who's missing from the story we've been telling about Wisconsin?

Because of supporters like you, we've built a home for the histories that don't make it into textbooks.

From Hmong refugees and Indigenous storytellers to union organizers, LGBTQ+ activists, and Black dairy farmers, we've spent decades lifting up the voices that too often go unheard in larger institutions.

We've digitized oral histories, preserved delicate artifacts, and built deeply human exhibits that welcome tens of thousands of visitors every year.

But now, that work is at risk.

Our building — a century-old former courthouse — is rich with architectural charm, but it wasn't designed to house fragile archival materials, modern technology, or a growing community of learners. Water damage, outdated electrical systems, and inadequate storage are threatening the very stories we exist to preserve.

Meanwhile, requests for school visits and public programming continue to grow — far beyond what our current space can accommodate.



WE'VE BUILT SOMETHING THAT MATTERS, SOMETHING PEOPLE TRUST AND WANT MORE OF.

But if we don't act now we risk losing much of what we've preserved.

That's why we're launching the Stories Worth Saving campaign - to protect our collections, expand our reach, and ensure that everyone who walks through our doors sees their story reflected on our walls.

Because history isn't just names and dates.
It's memory.
It's identity.

It's who we are as Wisconsinites - and who we're still becoming.
And without a safe, welcoming, fully equipped space to protect it, that history could disappear.

"I brought my 3rd graders last fall and the staff had to split us into two groups. They make it work - but it's clearly bursting at the seams. The kids loved it. They just wanted more."

- Mike Hanson, Teacher

What's Holding Us Back

“Our Building Can’t Keep Up With Our Mission.”

From the Menominee beadwork handed down through generations, to the 1930s steelworker’s union ledger found in an attic on the west side, to the black-and-white photos of Wisconsin’s first Hmong student graduation—history walks through our doors every week.

What we don’t have... is space.

Our beloved building - a 1912 courthouse turned museum in 1980 - has reached a breaking point. Behind the beauty of marble floors and WPA murals is a facility that simply wasn’t built to preserve fragile artifacts or host 21st-century learning.

“We’ve had elders try to donate family items that are over 100 years old. Right now, I have to store those in a space that’s no better than a basement. That’s going to change.”
Reggie Lee, Collections Manager.



Every day we operate under these limitations, we're leaving history behind — and leaving community members out.

Infrastructure Strain

- Leaking rooflines and deteriorating plaster put collections at risk during heavy rains.
- No fire suppression in key storage areas — one accident could erase decades of history.
- Outdated HVAC systems mean we can't maintain the climate control required for preservation.

Access Limitations

- No elevator access to our second-floor exhibits means visitors with disabilities or mobility issues are excluded.
- Restrooms and entrances are only partially ADA-compliant, creating barriers for seniors, wheelchair users, and school groups.

Space Constraints

- We've run out of safe storage — and cannot accept new community donations without putting them at risk.
- Our galleries are at capacity, limiting our ability to host traveling exhibits or expand interpretive programming.
- Our classroom space holds fewer than 20 students at a time, capping the impact of one of our most in-demand programs.

Technology Gaps

- Many of our displays are static and outdated — with no capacity for interactivity or multimedia.
- We lack the infrastructure to stream events or record oral histories digitally, limiting reach to rural and remote learners.

We've done everything possible to make this space work.

Now it's time to do what this moment truly calls for:

**Restore what we love.
Expand to meet our need,
and make space for everyone.**

WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

“A Restored Treasure. An Expanded Future.”

We're not just planning for more space - we're planning for deeper impact.

The Stories Worth Saving campaign is a \$6 million initiative to restore the Marigold Museum's beloved historic home and expand it into a fully modern, accessible, and future-ready cultural hub for the Fox Valley.

This project will preserve what makes the Marigold special, while equipping it to reach more people, tell more stories, and serve the community at an entirely new level.

Phase 1: Restore the Historic Core

We'll protect and upgrade the original 1912 building — ensuring it remains a welcoming, structurally sound, and historically preserved part of downtown Appleton.

This includes:

- Full roof and window replacement to prevent water intrusion
- New fire suppression and security systems to protect our collections
- Upgraded electrical and climate control systems to meet museum standards
- ADA-compliant entryways, restrooms, and elevators to ensure full access for all visitors



Phase 2: Expand Our Space

We'll add a 7,000-square-foot expansion that gives our staff, visitors, and collections the room they need to grow.

The new addition will include:

- Two modern, flexible galleries for rotating exhibitions and special events
- A climate-controlled archive to house fragile and priceless artifacts safely
- A dedicated education suite for school groups, workshops, and lifelong learners
- A digital storytelling lab for capturing oral histories, community interviews, and live-streaming programs
- Multi-use community space for partnerships, programming, and dialogue

WHY US?

“Trusted. Proven. Beloved.”

We've told the stories that don't always make it into textbooks:

- A child's hand-drawn map of a Hmong refugee camp
- The protest signs from Appleton's first LGBTQ+ pride rally
- Oral histories from Black factory workers in the 1970s
- The sewing machine a Polish grandmother used to clothe five generations

We've Proven We Know How to Listen — and Lead.

The Marigold Museum has carved out a distinct role:

A museum that isn't afraid to confront hard history.

One that opens its doors wide to new voices, and one that measures success not in revenue, but in reflection and representation.

These stories are Wisconsin's stories. And our museum is where they live.



For nearly 50 years, the Marigold Museum has stood as a gathering place for those who believe history belongs to everyone - not just the privileged, powerful, or well-documented.

We've Built a Track Record of Impact and Responsibility.

- Over 80,000 annual visitors — from schoolchildren to scholars
- Regular partnerships with tribal nations, cultural groups, and universities
- Respected by educators, elders, and local government
- Strong fiscal stewardship, with balanced budgets and clean audits for 15+ years
- Fully accredited by the Wisconsin Association of Museums

When you give to the Marigold, they know two things:

Your gift is stewarded wisely— and it matters.

We're Filling a Gap That No One Else Is Addressing.

Larger institutions tell big-picture stories. We specialize in the personal, the local, and the overlooked.

We don't compete with them. We complete the historical landscape.

This campaign is the next chapter in a trusted story, written by people who have proven their care, their competence, and their commitment to this community.

With your help, we'll preserve that story, and build the space it needs to grow.

"I never expected to see my family's history in a museum, but then I saw a photo of my uncle in the Bracero Program exhibit — and I cried. That's when I realized how much this place matters."



WHAT THIS WILL MAKE POSSIBLE

“More Room to Remember.”

This campaign isn't just about fixing old walls or adding new rooms.

It's about changing what's possible - for our visitors, our community, and the generations that follow. By restoring and expanding the Marigold Museum, we'll create a welcoming, modern space that finally matches the depth of the stories we tell and the diversity of the people we serve.

We'll serve more students — more meaningfully.

Right now, we're turning away school groups or asking them to visit in shifts.

After the expansion, we'll:

- Double our student capacity, allowing us to serve 250+ classrooms each year
- Host interactive workshops in a dedicated education suite
- Create flexible learning spaces that inspire curiosity and reflection
- Provide virtual access to classrooms across rural Wisconsin

We'll protect our most fragile collections - forever.

Our new archive will:

- Provide climate-controlled, fire-protected storage for rare and at-risk items
- Allow us to accept new community donations we currently can't take
- Support digitization, conservation, and research for decades to come

We'll bring in more voices — and more visitors.

With expanded galleries, we can:

- Triple the number of rotating exhibits each year
- Host traveling exhibitions of national significance
- Spotlight underrepresented local artists and historians
- Create space for public dialogue, art installations, and live events

We'll reach more people — and meet them where they are.

Our upgraded tech infrastructure will allow us to:

- Livestream lectures and panels – and expand our reach across the state and beyond.
- Record and share oral histories in our digital storytelling lab
- Expand access for seniors and rural communities who can't visit in person
- Offer multilingual and adaptive content for broader inclusion

WE'LL BECOME A TRUE CULTURAL CORNERSTONE FOR APPLETON.

WITH THIS TRANSFORMATION, THE MARIGOLD MUSEUM WILL:



Stand as a regional leader in inclusive storytelling



Act as a bridge between communities, generations, and perspectives



Provide a space for civic reflection, shared learning, and pride in who we are — and who we've yet to become

This is what your gift makes possible:

Not just more space -

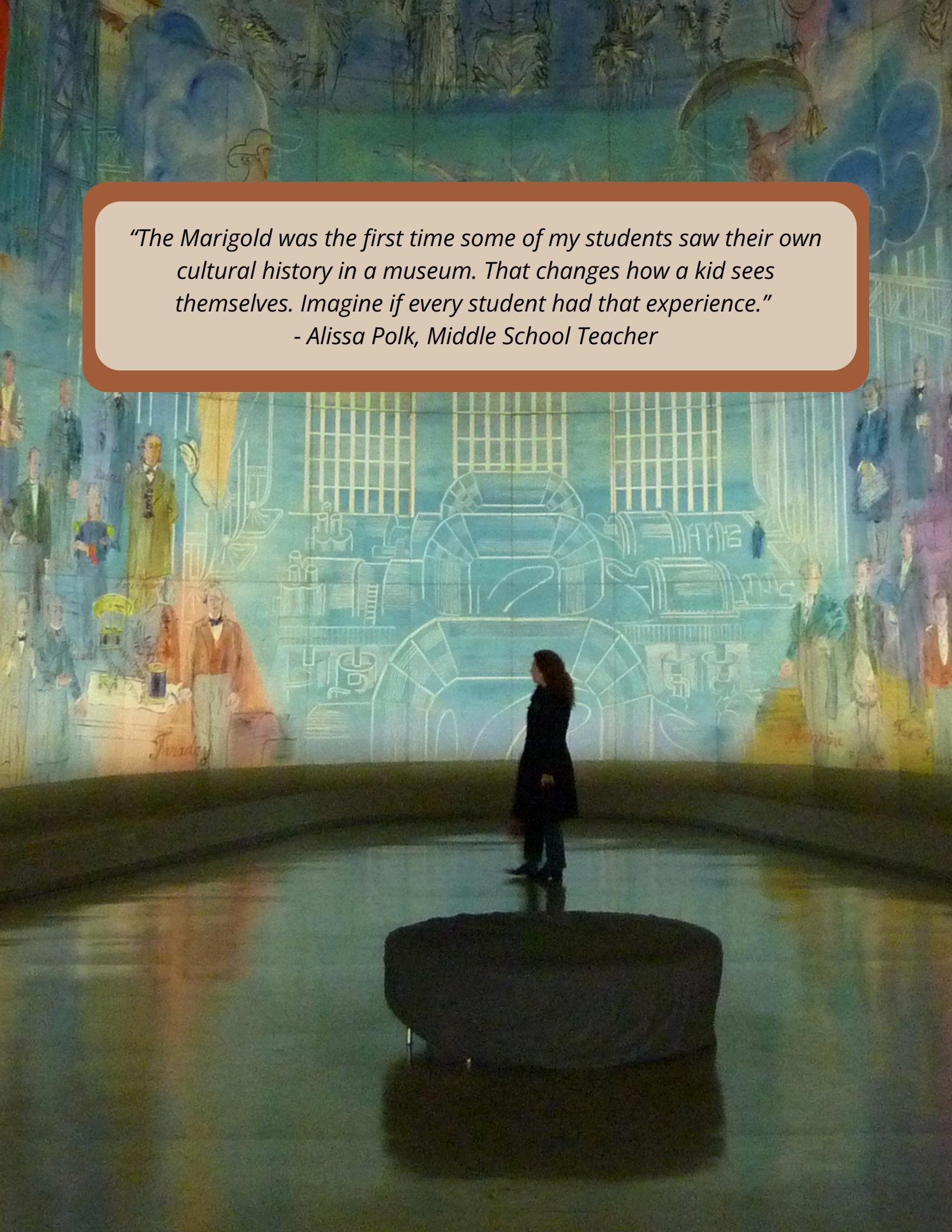
More connection.

More inclusion.

More futures changed by the power of seeing ourselves in history.



**LET'S BUILD THE MUSEUM
THAT BUILDS BELONGING.**



"The Marigold was the first time some of my students saw their own cultural history in a museum. That changes how a kid sees themselves. Imagine if every student had that experience."

- Alissa Polk, Middle School Teacher

HOW YOU CAN HELP

“This Is the Moment to Make History — Literally.”

The Stories Worth Saving campaign isn't just about bricks and mortar.

It's about memory, dignity, and belonging, and the future of inclusive storytelling in Appleton.

It's about protecting the past — and creating space for what comes next.

With your help, we'll ensure that Wisconsin's overlooked histories have a permanent home, and that every visitor sees themselves reflected in the story of our state.



This campaign will fund:



Restoration of our historic 1912 building
(*roof, windows, HVAC, fire suppression, ADA access*)



7,000 sq. ft. expansion
(*new galleries, education center, community space, archive*)



Technology & digital infrastructure upgrades
(*oral history lab, livestreaming, interactive displays*)

YOUR GIFT, OUR FUTURE

Every contribution brings us closer to a museum that reflects all of Wisconsin - and honors every story.

- \$100,000 → Names the new community classroom
- \$25,000 → Funds an exhibit on untold immigrant histories
- \$10,000 → Equips the oral history & digital storytelling lab
- \$5,000 → Provides climate-controlled shelving in the new archive
- \$1,000 → Purchases adaptive technology for accessibility

Recognition and Naming Opportunities

Every donor to the campaign will be recognized in a permanent donor installation inside the expanded museum — and those making leadership-level gifts may be eligible for space naming, program sponsorship, or custom acknowledgment based on their interests.

We're not just building a museum.
We're building a legacy — and we want your name to be part of it.

Will you help us save these stories —
and build the space they need to live on?





**LET'S MAKE HISTORY,
TOGETHER.**