

## **Friends of Fred Smith Organizational History 1998 – 2002**

In 1995 Friends of Fred Smith, Inc. was formed by a group of people concerned about the preservation and development of Fred Smith's Wisconsin Concrete Park, a unique Price County cultural resource. This "Friends" group, formed by Price County stakeholders and people from beyond the County, exists to serve Price County by sharing responsibility for this County park, and was formed to:

- Ensure the historically accurate conservation and preservation of the sculptures, house, and landscape of the Wisconsin Concrete Park;
- Oversee the proper maintenance of the Wisconsin Concrete Park as a park and outdoor museum, for the education and enjoyment of the public,
- Collect and preserve visual and oral history pertaining to Fred Smith and his works,
- Create an endowment for the site by solicitation of grants, contributions, and gifts,
- And, to foster public appreciation of this cultural resource by the development of educational and interpretive materials and programs.

### **Friends of Fred Smith mission statement:**

Friends of Fred Smith exists to support the Wisconsin Concrete Park in cooperation with Price County. The mission of Friends of Fred Smith is to preserve the Wisconsin Concrete Park and all its resources, including sculptures, landscape, and the Smith House, and to maintain and develop it as a public educational and cultural facility.

### **Friends of Fred Smith board, staff, and advisors**

The FoFS board of directors is comprised of 25 talented, dedicated individuals representing the geographic diversity of Price County and its corporate, artistic, historical, civic, and political community, as well as individuals from beyond the county who have long-standing interest in the Wisconsin Concrete Park.

Our team of managing directors share talents in art, educational programming, and development for cultural and non-profit organizations. Our Advisory Board includes an international roster of professionals who advocate for the preservation of art environments in general, and who support the preservation and development of Fred Smith's Wisconsin Concrete Park by advising Friends of Fred Smith, Inc. in matters of preservation, networking, and development.

Since 1995 Friends of Fred Smith has made great headway in accomplishing the goals of its stated mission, and has formed valuable partnerships with a number of local civic and cultural organizations. FoFS has broadened its outreach to individuals in the county of all ages, while serving the extensive and varied population of tourists from the state, the region, the country, as well as international visitors, whose numbers have increased as the site has increased its offerings and accessibility.

It is estimated that well over 10,000 visitors tour the site each year, and that many people from around the country and the world visit Price County specifically to see the Wisconsin Concrete Park. Our guest register chronicles a wide geographic range of visitors, as well as their positive comments on the site. The following is a small, random selection of visitor comments:

- Something you will never see the likes of again & never forget.
- Es muy grande y bonito! Amor!
- Glad to see someone preserving the work. Nice, hope it can be restored.
- Testimony to human creativity and dedication

## **Friends of Fred Smith Organizational History 1998 – 2002**

Friends of Fred Smith maintains a membership of approximately 100 individuals and families who are dedicated to the preservation and development of Fred Smith's legacy. Members receive newsletters, announcements about our events and activities, and know that they are supporting the art of Fred Smith, an historic, cultural site with international significance.

### **Partnerships and Alliances**

**Countryside Artists** -- Friends of Fred Smith has formed an important partnership with the Countryside Artists, Price County's primary artist's cooperative. Friends of Fred Smith has overseen the leasing of the downstairs of the historic Fred Smith house to the Countryside Artists. The Countryside Artists occupy the house annually from May to December. In addition to providing an essential on-site presence, allowing visitors to tour the house—an integral part of the site--the Countryside Artists sell items that support Friends of Fred Smith, providing a much-needed income stream, approximately \$4,000.00 - \$5,000.00 per year.

**Veterans groups** -- In 1995 five area veterans groups (VFW Post #8491, American Legion Post #122, VFW Post #5778, VFW Post #5778 Auxiliary, American Legion Post #182) participated in a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War Two at the annual Smith celebration. Three directors of FoFS are members of local Veterans organizations. FoFS created a permanent veteran's memorial at the Wisconsin Concrete Park, dedicated in August 2002.

**Price County Historical Society** -- The Wisconsin Concrete Park illustrates much Price County and area history. Friends of Fred Smith has maintained communication with the PCHS, has hosted this historical society at FoFS celebrations, and has shared newsletter space or announcements and articles.

**Boy and Girl Scouts** -- In 1996 a project involving area Boy Scouts on an Eagle Award project entailed the restoration of Smith's Kerosene Wagon. In 1998 Girl Scouts learned how to collect and sort glass from the sculptures, and assisted with other annual conservation activities.

In 1998, 2000, and 2001 interns from the University of Wisconsin-Madison spent 2 weeks on site conducting conservation activities.

### **Friends of Fred Smith: Serving Price County residents and visitors alike**

#### **Public Events**

- Wisconsin Concrete Park Annual Celebration, each August since 1988
- The Fred Smith Parade Brigade has participated in numerous Price County parades since 1993.
- 2002: Childrens' art workshops and dedication of Veteran's Memorial
- 2001: Childrens' art workshops
- 1999: Concrete plaque making workshop and Marionette puppet making and performing workshop; Pinery Road musical performance
- 1998: Concrete plaque-making workshop, Marionette puppet making and performing workshop; Pinery Road musical performance