

2018 was a great year for bringing “new and different” to Fostoria in a very visible way, and that has certainly paved the way for further development this year as well as we work to improve the community image and quality of life, while welcoming visitors to town.

To help us expand the Barn Quilt Trail locally, Bev Lang and Patricia Brady have begun painting custom barn quilt squares. Both ladies attended one of our workshops with Suzi Parron last year and were excited to help grow the barn quilt trail in the Fostoria area. Bev is now offering her own “sold-out” barn quilt painting workshops in Fostoria to teach others how to create their own squares, and Pat will have a booth to sell barn quilt squares at Fostoria Farmer’s Markets this year. We’re working collaboratively to promote barn quilts as a way to develop and promote tourism to our community. These additional opportunities will make it easier for residents and businesses to add a barn quilt square to our local trail so visitors can drive through town to view their unique artwork.

As a host community for the Midwest Sculpture Initiative this past year, we’ve recognized the importance visual arts plays in improving the quality of life in our community. Participation in this unique program has created a lot of interest and brought excitement to our downtown area.

Over the past year, we’ve received many comments that the Promise to Flower sculpture next to the library is at the perfect location for this piece. One of our goals for participating in the sculpture initiative program is that we could occasionally add a sculpture to our community permanently. I now have the privilege to announce today that the Fostoria Area Visitors Bureau has received a gift to purchase “Promise to Flower” as a permanent addition to our downtown landscape.

A grant from The Gregory Mullins Advised Fund of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida along with a personal donation directly from Greg and his wife Lesa were earmarked for the Visitors Bureau to purchase “Promise to Flower” as a memorial to Greg’s father, Mark Mullins. A well-respected and active member of Fostoria’s business community, including FEDC, Mark transferred to Fostoria from Cummins in Columbus, Indiana in 1967 to be the controller at Atlas Crankshaft, and was promoted to Vice President and General Manager in 1973. Mark served on various boards and was heavily involved in civic and charitable leadership roles as well before moving to Florida in 1984.

I’m thrilled that this gift helps us grow our permanent collection of outdoor sculptures to build a better community. We’re grateful to share this fantastic gift with Fostoria while honoring the memory of an outstanding former resident.

With the commission we’ll receive on the purchase of this piece, Fostoria’s 2019/2020 sculpture exhibit is now fully funded. So mark your calendars for Thursday, May 16th as the installation day for our new exhibit. With larger and bolder sculptures to bring interest to Fostoria’s downtown corridor you’ll see that new and different continues in Fostoria in 2019!