

NEWS from SAUGATUCK/DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Information Contacts:

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Kristen Gebben
(269) 857-5751
kgebbs@yahoo.com

Judy Anthrop
(269) 857-1183
anthropjt@wml.com

SAUGATUCK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CREATES SIGN FOR "OLD SCHOOL HOUSE" PROJECT IN DOUGLAS

SAUGATUCK (MI) MAY 4, 2006 -- An eight-foot tall sign created by Saugatuck High School junior student Will Gibbons has been chosen to publicly display the progress of fundraising efforts by the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society for revitalizing the Old School House, a prominent historic landmark standing since 1866 on Center Street in the Douglas business district. The sign will be installed on the School House lawn as a prominent reminder of the urgent need for community support of this important project.

Active in the High School's art program since his freshman year, Gibbons is a member of the art class of teacher Christa Wise, who was invited to guide students in submitting designs for a "thermometer" type sign as a class project. His design was favored among several competing entries for its creative concept, relevance to education and ease of reading.

Gibbons, an Eagle Scout, has contributed to various community projects including helping to rebuild the steps at Douglas Beach. At Saugatuck High School, he participates in track and cross-country sports, and is considering career possibilities in product design or video production. A native of Elkhart, IN, he lived in the state of Washington before moving to the Holland area about five years ago with parents Theresa and Dan Gibbons.

In 2005, the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society launched its ambitious campaign to buy, preserve and rededicate the building as a unique new Discovery Center, in a cooperative effort with the area's District Library and Public Schools. Plans envision a community resource where children and adults alike can explore the area's history, culture, ecology and architecture

through recreational activities, educational programs, special events and access to a unique archive of objects, photos and records.

The Discovery Center also is expected to enhance the area's destination appeal in the growing heritage tourism industry. The Old School House, which served as a public school until 1957 and has many alumni among current area residents, is one of the oldest multi-classroom school buildings in Michigan and considered one of the finest examples of 19th century school architecture in America.

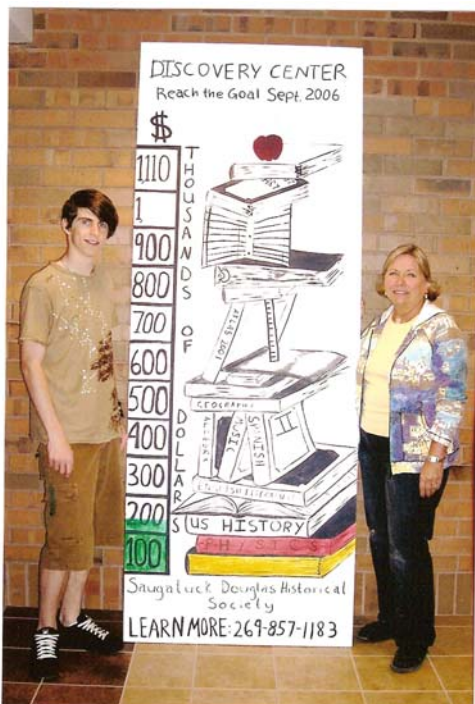
Challenged by a purchase option agreement to be exercised in September of this year, the Society already has received a matching grant for \$425,000 and raised \$150,000 in matching donations. A series of fun events promoting broader public support will be announced soon, including a June 5 party at the Blue Moon restaurant in Douglas, a Country Faire on July 2, and a Town Meeting on July 12.

For more information about the Old School House Project and the preservation of this distinctive community asset, call Kristin Gebben, S/DHS Development Director, (269) 857-5751.

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PHOTO AND CAPTION FOLLOW

(This image is for review only -- a jpeg version is attached for print reproduction.)



Student Will Gibbons and art teacher Christa Wise display Gibbons' fundraising progress sign created for Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society's "Old School House Project"

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