

I Love FDL

A communal project.
Real Stories. Real People. Real Impact.

February 1st 2026



Fondly
“Six Pack”
Weekly
SERIES

I LOVE FDL

Weekly news, inspiration, updates and happenings

The Fondy Frontline

Looking for a reliable ride in Fond du Lac? 🚕 Hometown Taxi is a locally owned service offering friendly drivers, flat-rate fares, and dependable rides around town since 2017. As a musician and karaoke host, I use them often—and they've always been a solid, hometown choice you can count on.

Faces Of Our Future

Dan Hebel, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Fond du Lac, has spent more than 21 years serving local youth, driven by a belief in creating meaningful experiences and access to caring adults. His work is rooted in the idea that true impact happens daily in small moments—and that Fond du Lac is an incredible community that should take pride in what it already is.

Finding Balance

Cold weather magnifies burnout, loneliness, and the deep desire to simply rest without guilt, making intentional self-care—like staying hydrated, prioritizing sleep, and allowing comfort—essential. At the same time, serving others in need during these cold seasons restores connection, purpose, and often brings unexpected healing to ourselves.

Hometown Heroes

Fond du Lac's Veterans Services Office (CVSO) provides free, county-funded support to veterans and their families, helping them access the benefits, resources, and assistance they've earned. Led by retired Marine 1st Sergeant David Tellefsen, the local CVSO also works to strengthen the community through outreach and projects like the Veterans Park restoration.

Creative Corner

Learning through play sparks creativity, problem-solving, and confidence in children, often without them even realizing they're learning. Programs like Inspired Builders at the Children's Museum of Fond du Lac let kids explore, create, and discover in ways that are fun first and educational second.

Play Explore Repeat

Dave's Engine Service is a third-generation, family-run business on Scott Street that has been keeping Fond du Lac's outdoor power equipment running strong since 1977. From selling and servicing trusted brands to custom chainsaw work for sturgeon spearing season, it's a hidden local gem built on decades of hands-on experience and hometown know-how.

I Love FDL



THE FONDY FRONTLINE

Hometown Taxi

Looking for a reliable ride in **Fond du Lac, Wisconsin?** 🚕 Check out **Hometown Taxi** – a locally owned taxi service that's been serving our community with friendly drivers and flat-rate fares since 2017! Whether you need a quick local run, a ride to work, or a safe lift around town, Hometown Taxi knows the roads and the people that make Fond du Lac special. Give them a call and support hometown service with a personal touch! ☎️⭐️ As a Musician and Karaoke Host, I use Hometown Taxi often.





Faces of our future

Q&A WITH DAN HEBEL



Dan Hebel currently serves as CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Fond du Lac. Having worked with our local youth community for the last 21 years, Dan strives to provide the resources that his team needs to execute their focus of creating meaningful experiences and opportunities for youth that help them reach their fullest potential. Thank you, Dan, for the dedication and care you continue to give to Fond du Lac's youth, and for helping make a difference in our community. (Make sure to read all the way through for a real hit-home statement from Dan!)

What does a typical day or week look like for you?

I spend most of my time working with the people that execute our mission every day, which starts with our incredible group of leadership team members and extends to our Board of Directors. Some days I focus heavily on fundraising and building relationships. Other times I focus on financial responsibilities of the organization. We are constantly working to identify needs for the youth we serve and exploring the best ways to meet those needs.

What inspired you to work with children or teens?

I have always enjoyed the hopeful nature of youth and how little they actually need to be content. Seeing the growth of many of the youth who have come through the Club over the last 20 years is what has kept me coming back.

Is there a moment or experience that reminds you why your work matters?

There are moments every minute we're open at the Club: a member who couldn't wait to get to one of our locations to celebrate a good test grade with a staff that helped them; an enthusiastic smile and THANK YOU from a member who goes through the line during our afterschool or summer meal program, sincerely thankful for something to eat; the vulnerable approach of a teen member struggling with their mental health or their home life.

What part of your work are you most proud of?

I am proud to lead an organization that does things the right way and for the right reasons. Over time, we have assembled an astute and dedicated team of professionals and volunteers that will stop at nothing to make a positive impact on the lives of youth.

I still get visited by Club youth who I worked with from 2005-2008. They come in and share stories about their lives, introduce me to their kids, ask for advice and more. I hope every Club kid knows they can always come back and share their lives with us.

What does the Fond du Lac community mean to you?

Fond du Lac is home. I grew up here, then left for college in La Crosse. Fortunately for me, the Boys & Girls Club of Fond du Lac saw something in me and hired me in January 2005. I didn't know it then, but it was the launching point to a career and the re-creation of my long-term homestead. I have been incredibly fortunate to grow along with this community over the last 20 years, and I am thankful that my wife and I have had the opportunity to raise our kids in this community!



Faces of our future

Q&A WITH DAN HEBEL - CONTINUE

How does the community support your work with youth?

Thanks to the generosity of so many, we are able to do so much for kids in Fond du Lac! We are nothing without the people who make this work possible. Countless participants, donors, supporters and partners have created what has become a fixture in our community. Donors continue to invest in what we do because they see the impact all over our community. The Boys & Girls Club of Fond du Lac is a true product OF Fond du Lac!



What do you wish people better understood about working with youth today?

Most kids today aren't set up well for success. While parenting and home life are a significant part of it, there are more pitfalls than ever for kids, and navigating the first 18 years of life is full of things that can trip them up. The average youth in America needs several avenues of access to caring adults to help them avoid falling into societal traps. Organizations like the Boys & Girls Club help to provide a positive, supportive environment that can offer additional support to so many youth who need it most.

What do you hope young people gain from your guidance or support?

I hope they know that the Club will always be there for them. Regardless of how successful or how troubled their past, present or future is, I hope they always know that they can walk into our doors and have someone to talk to. We serve kids, but ultimately, we work to build communities!

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I most seek out down-time! I enjoy golfing and spending time with friends and family. As my kids have grown, I have found significant joy in watching them compete in sports. I have watched and coached many baseball, football, basketball, cross country and track events over the years. It's a constant reminder of my purpose at home.

Do you have a favorite place, activity, or tradition in Fond du Lac?

Gilles Drive In is a staple. Not just for the food and unique service, but also because I worked there from 1997-2001. That place just screams FDL to me and represents what is best about our community. Fruth Field, Lakeside Park, Buttermilk sledding hill and countless baseball diamonds give me cause for nostalgia for the past.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the community?

True impact doesn't always show itself in grandiose examples. Rather, it hits you dozens of times in small ways every day. That's how I know our mission really matters.

Too often, Fond du Lac is it's own worst enemy. People tend to pay too much attention to what we aren't. It's time to get out of our own way and celebrate what we are instead! This community is incredible...let's start taking credit for it!





I Love FDL

Fond du Lac County Veterans Services Office

Did you know in our own backyard, we have a Veterans Services Office (CVSO)? Do you know what CVSO's do? CVSO are a county funded program committed to providing the upmost support to veterans, at no cost. CVSO's provide assistance to veterans and their families to pursue all benefits, entitlements, and resources they are entitled to.

Services Provided:

- General Education Information
- Death & Burial Assistance
- HealthCare
- Pension Programs
- Medical Transportation
- Lost Award Replacements
- Military Records
- State Veterans Home

Our local CVSO is ran by David Tellefsen, a retired Marine 1st Sergeant who was stationed in Fond du Lac during his service and has raised his family in our community. He is currently helping the Fond du Lac office by outreaching to the community for awareness. Additionally, he is leading the FDL Veterans Park restoration project. They are asking the community for their help in raising money to restore the park.

If you are passionate about Veterans or know someone close to you that is a Veteran, the CVSO is putting honor brick tiles in the new Veterans park. These bricks are available on their website, for \$75-100/ each. (Price varies based on customization.) All funds raised will go to specialty lighting, sound, and security enhancements, ensuring the park is a beautiful, safe, and welcoming space for all.

To order a brick- go to: <https://polarengraving.com/fdlcveteransservices>

If you or if you know someone seeking Veterans Assistance, call or stop into our local CVSO day! The CVSO is helping Veterans and their families receive the benefits they are entitled to.

FDL CVSO is located at 160 S Macy Street in downtown Fond du Lac. They are open Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm. (excluding any federal holidays) The phone number is 920-929-3117.

Author: Ashley Ernst



Learning Through Play: Inspired Builders at the Children's Museum of Fond du Lac

Learning and play go hand in hand, especially for kids. Some of the best growth happens when children are building, exploring, pretending, and asking questions without even realizing they are learning. Fond du Lac has great spaces that encourage curiosity, creativity, and hands-on discovery in ways that feel fun first and educational second.

One upcoming opportunity is Inspired Builders, happening Wednesday at 11:00 AM at the Children's Museum of Fond du Lac, located at 75 West Scott Street. This hands-on program invites kids to imagine, create, and build using blocks and other materials, helping them develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and confidence through play. The activity is included with regular museum admission.

What makes learning through play so powerful is that it meets kids where they are. Whether they are stacking blocks, working together, or experimenting with new ideas, these experiences help spark curiosity and build lifelong learning skills. It is a simple reminder that some of the most meaningful learning moments happen when kids are free to play, explore, and have fun.

Author: Shane Michael

PLAY. EXPLORE. REPEAT.



You've Driven Past It for Years: The Story Behind Dave's Engine Service

If you've ever driven down Scott Street in Fond du Lac, chances are you've passed Dave's Engine Service without really knowing what was inside. I know I did. I grew up right around the corner and honestly had no idea there was a full-blown engine shop tucked into that building until I bought a weed whacker Travis posted on Facebook Marketplace. I walked in and immediately thought, "How did I not know this place existed?"

Dave's Engine Service is one of those classic Fond du Lac businesses with real roots. It all started back in 1977 when Dave opened the original shop in Mount Calvary while working full time at Tecumseh in New Holstein. What began as a side passion quickly turned into something bigger. In 1985, the second location opened at 184 West Scott Street. Fun fact: that building has lived a few lives. It used to be a beer distribution hub, then an upholstery shop, and even housed a wood maker before engines ever filled the space.

That same year, Dave's son Steve took over the business, running both the Mount Calvary and Fond du Lac locations at the same time. The Mount Calvary shop closed about five years ago, but the legacy stayed strong. Today, the business is in its third generation, with Travis at the helm. He grew up in it, literally running the Mount Calvary location under his grandpa before moving full time to the Scott Street shop. This is not a side hustle. It is what they know, what they've lived, and what they're great at.



PLAY. EXPLORE. REPEAT.



You've Driven Past It for Years: The Story Behind Dave's Engine Service - CONTINUE

Inside the shop, it's truly a one-stop spot for outdoor power needs. Dave's Engine Service sells trusted brands like Husqvarna, Toro, Stihl, and Echo, and they service just about any brand of outdoor power equipment you can throw at them. Lawn mowers, weed whackers, chainsaws, leaf blowers, motorcycles, ATVs, and even mopeds. They also mount and balance tires for motorcycles and lawn mowers, which is something a lot of people do not even realize is available locally.

And then there's the very Wisconsin specialty. Dave's revamps chainsaws specifically for cutting holes during sturgeon spearing season and even makes custom chainsaw blades designed for cutting through ice. That kind of niche knowledge does not come from a manual. It comes from decades of hands-on experience and understanding how people actually use their equipment here.

Dave's Engine Service is one of those places that reminds you why locally owned, family-run businesses matter. It has history, skill, and heart packed into one unassuming building on Scott Street. If you need outdoor power equipment, repairs, or just solid advice from people who genuinely know their stuff, stop in and check it out. I promise, once you walk inside, you'll be just as surprised as I was.



Finding Balance

I Love FDL

Prolonged cold weather doesn't just chill our bones- it wears on our nervous systems, our patience, and our sense of hope.

As a nurse, I've seen how extended cold spells increase illness, isolation, and fatigue. As a leadership coach, I see something quieter but just as real: people pushing through, ignoring their own limits, and telling themselves they should be 'tougher'. Cold weather has a way of magnifying what's already there- burnout, loneliness, and the deep desire to simply rest without guilt.

Caring for ourselves during these stretches doesn't require perfection... it requires intention. Practical basics matter more than we admit- staying hydrated even when we don't feel thirsty, prioritizing sleep, layering warmth instead of enduring the cold, and getting brief daylight exposure when possible. Equally important is tending to our inner world- slowing down, reducing unnecessary commitments, and allowing ourselves comfort without self-judgment. The hidden desire many won't say out loud is this, "we want permission to soften, to rest, to stop proving our resilience and simply be cared for, even if that care starts with ourselves". This is called wintering- and it's absolutely necessary to rejuvenate from the inside out!

There is also healing found in looking beyond our own front doors. Cold weather disproportionately impacts those without stable housing, reliable heat, or community support. Offering warm meals, donating winter gear, checking on neighbors, or supporting local shelters doesn't just help others survive- it restores our sense of connection and purpose. In nursing, we call this 'protective factors'; in leadership, we call it meaning. When we serve, we are reminded that we are part of something larger than our discomfort- and that reminder can be deeply regulating to the human spirit.

In using our gifts to serve others, and serving the vulnerable, we often find ourselves healed in unexpected ways.

In seasons of cold- both literal and emotional- care is not a weakness. It is faith in action. And it is how we endure, together.

This week is PACKED with awesome deals from some of Fond du Lac's favorite small businesses!  If you've been needing a sign to shop local... this is it.  Dive into the specials below, show love to the shops that make our city feel like home, and have an amazing week, Fondy! 

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