

For immediate release

May 29, 2024

Contact:

hopeforearthrf@gmail.com

<https://www.hopeforearth.org/>

Mark Klapatch-Mathias

920-619-9401

New name, same mission: Hope for Creation changing name to Hope for Earth

River Falls, Wis. – Hope for Creation, a sustainability-focused organization based in River Falls, has changed its name to Hope for Earth. The organization’s mission to create a hopeful, ecologically sustainable future through collaboration, education, partnerships, advocacy, and action remains the same.

[Hope for Creation](#) was founded in 2014 by a group of churches collaborating to address environmental concerns. Several of the churches created “green teams” to further sustainability efforts resulting in numerous accomplishments including three churches installing solar panels to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. A connection to a faith community was never a requirement for participation in the organization and membership has grown into a larger community effort with numerous partner organizations. The group gained momentum in 2017 when 300 people attended a presentation by Paul Douglas at a local church.

“That event was an eye opener,” Sandy Tauferner, one of the Hope for Earth leaders, said. “We realized we needed to expand because the turnout for that speech showed us that a lot of people are interested in what is happening with our environment.”

Hope for Creation grew in its community outreach. The group spearheaded the establishment of [Earth Fest](#), in 2022. This event was a direct result of some of the group’s efforts prior to the pandemic and a way to re-engage the community. Hope for Earth will continue to facilitate additional programming such as the sustainability speaker series in partnership with the City of River Falls, the River Falls Public Library and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The group will also continue to work with the River Falls School District and others to promote more sustainable practices by offering regular classes through community education.

Paul Douglas returned to River Falls on April 20 to serve as a keynote speaker for Earth Fest 2024.

“I would love to clone what you guys are doing in River Falls,” Douglas said. “You folks are probably five, 10 years ahead of the curve. I’ve been to hundreds of communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and I’ve never seen a town take sustainability as seriously as River Falls. This is my definition of best practice.”

According to members, the new name is a better reflection of the more expansive membership of the organization.

“The new name more closely reflects the group and our efforts,” said member Mark Klapatch-Mathias, who is one of the Hope for Earth Leaders and the sustainability coordinator at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. “This effort started with churches and has successfully grown. This new name is more representative of that broader group and the spirit of collaboration and connecting to other organizations in western Wisconsin.”

While the word creation in the previous name was simply intended to mean all creation on Earth, the word was often associated with creationism and became a barrier in bringing in new members, especially from those outside of faith communities. The new name is reflective of the inclusive membership and the comprehensive efforts to advance sustainability.

Hope for Earth will form a nonprofit organization, which will enable more efficient and effective fundraising efforts.

“We’re looking forward to continuing the partnerships we have and expanding upon them,” Klapatch-Mathias said. “We want to strengthen those bonds and broaden our work in the community with the aim of continuing to grow collaborative sustainability initiatives.”

To celebrate the new name, Hope for Earth members are organizing a Hope for Earth Social at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 13 at [Glen Park](#) Pavilion, 630-632 Glen Park Road, River Falls. The event will also serve as a time to thank the planning team for [Earth Fest](#). Anyone interested in learning more about Hope for Earth and ways to get involved are invited. [RSVPs](#) are encouraged.