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FEATURED

Carus schoolhouse finds a new home at area farm

John Baker
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Work began June 24 to prepare the Carus schoolhouse 'White Building' for a move to the Evans Farm nearby.

Courtesy Photo: Friends of the Carus Historic Schoolhouse

The Friends of the Carus Historic Schoolhouse, a local nonprofit devoted to preserving and restoring the Carus “White Building,” has signed a contract with Wolfe House & Building Movers to relocate it to nearby Evans Farms in order to

save it from demolition.

The current Carus School has been in need of improved parking for years. With the passage of the Canby School District bond in May 2020, the district was granted the funds necessary to make those improvements.

As a result, the Canby School District made the decision to either sell the White Building to someone who could move it or demolish it.

Last fall, another buyer was slated to take ownership of the historic schoolhouse. However, Chris Ritter, who formerly taught at Carus School for 30 years and is now president of the nonprofit, was working on a plan B in case the deal fell through.

On March 21, 2023, the Canby School District notified Ritter that her plan B was now plan A, and she immediately sprang into action.

Ritter, now joined by several other community members, had been working to ensure the building's safe relocation to Evans Farms, a family owned and operated nursery since 1857. It's a fitting place for the 1926 Craftsman-style building to be moved — not only have seven generations of Evans' attended Carus School, but the family lineage includes Clarence Evans, one of the original builders of the schoolhouse, who milled timber from the farm to construct the building.

“It makes my heart happy to know this schoolhouse, a place of great historical, architectural, and community significance, is one step closer to being saved,” said Ritter. “However, there's still a lot of work to be done — and a lot of funds that need to be raised — in a very short amount of time.”

Wolfe House & Building Movers began work on the historic schoolhouse Friday, June 23, in order to move the building in time for the new parking lot work to also be completed during summer break.

According to The Friends group, saving the two-room schoolhouse is just the beginning. On their website, they state their mission is to *"not only save this building from demolition, but to repurpose it as a gathering space for all in the community to enjoy."*

However, support from the community is needed to make this happen. Although the Friends of the Carus Historic Schoolhouse has already received \$55,000 from two donors, they will need to fundraise \$100,000 to complete the move.

Additionally, \$250,000 will need to be raised to renovate the building, which the Friends group intends to match with grants.

As stated on The Friends of the Carus Historic Schoolhouse website: *"For the community of Carus, the school is what has tied us together for over 100 years. And for almost as long, this beautiful craftsman building has been our landmark. Every historic building you see today exists because a group of people who cared about it took action. This is our moment to do the same for the White Building, and in the process, create something new for us to share."*

To learn more, make a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer services, donors and members of the community are asked to go to carushistoricschoolhouse.org.

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