



Illinois Humanities | January 2021

# GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Three Questions: Q&A with Jason and Christy Ackman, co-directors, the Farwell House



## The Illinois Humanities Spotlight

Bi-monthly Illinois Humanities highlights the work of our Community Grants program partners through our “Grantee Spotlight.” It shines the light on our grantee partner’s work, offering details about the organization and the funded project, as well as a Q&A with a team member at the organization. More: [ILHumanities.org/Spotlight](https://ILHumanities.org/Spotlight)

## Project

“Object of My Affection”

## Location

Frederick, Ill.



## Organization

Farwell House, founded in 2016, is an arts organization that hosts exhibitions, workshops, and cultural events, as well as artist residencies. It is located in a house built in 1867 by an agricultural merchant in Frederick, an unincorporated community of fewer than 200 residents near the Illinois River in western Illinois’s Schuyler County.

## Project Funded by Illinois Humanities

In “Object of My Affection,” Farwell House will invite approximately 20 residents of the Frederick area to identify a physical object that has been especially important or meaningful in her or his life. Artists associated with Farwell House will photograph the participants with the objects they have selected and interview them about their connection with these objects. Photographs and written commentaries will form the basis of an exhibition.

## Q1

How do you see the arts/culture/humanities as being essential?

Jason and Christy Ackman: Art in any form — writing, painting, sculpting, photography, dance — can be an act of faith. It is the idea that life, even when it’s at its hardest and full of flaws, can be improved by creating something and putting it out there. It’s the idea that we can share our experiences and our ability to process what is going on around us with others. Artists interpret their world and what is happening in it, and by doing so, are able to communicate with a wide range of audiences. They provide a way for others to both see themselves and to experience cultures and communities they have never experienced. Throughout history these things have been essential to our collective well-being. They are even more so now.



## Q2

What is the most important thing people should know about your work?

Jason and Christy Ackman: Farwell House is located in a small, rural township in west-central Illinois. Our goal is to create opportunities for our community to engage with the arts in meaningful ways. We strive to do this through community engagement with visiting artists and by developing projects such as The Object of My Affection, which puts the community members in the role of the storyteller.

## Q3

Who makes your work possible?

Jason and Christy Ackman: From the beginning, Farwell House has been a project that required the commitment and dedication of our entire family. Our work is often made possible through the support of friends, family members, and community volunteers. We also are able to continue our work thanks to support from Illinois Humanities, donations from local foundations, donations from community members, proceeds from events, and fees from our artist residency program.

## For more

[FarwellHouse.com](https://www.farwellhouse.com) | [@FarwellHouse](https://www.facebook.com/FarwellHouse) | [@FarwellHouse](https://www.instagram.com/FarwellHouse)

## About Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities, the Illinois affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a statewide nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community and strengthen civic engagement. We provide free, high-quality humanities experiences throughout Illinois, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, individuals living on low incomes, counties and towns in rural areas, small arts and cultural organizations, and communities highly impacted by mass incarceration.