

FCHM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING STATEMENT

History is filled with a wide range of voices and lived experiences. We promise to openly address historic disparities, encourage healthy conversation, and to include voices not previously acknowledged.

FCHM acknowledges that the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are integral to our mission and to ensuring the well-being of our staff and the communities we serve. We embrace these values in the work we do on a daily basis to collect and communicate materials and resources that foster historical knowledge.

We are committed to the preservation of a collective history of the people of Freeborn County, the state of Minnesota and the nation. We are guided by the belief that an inclusive interpretation of the past must uphold historical truths, must encompass a wide range of voices and lived experiences, and must not suppress information that may make some uncomfortable.

We acknowledge the dedication and commitment of individuals who worked to build FCHM into the outstanding institution it is today. At the same time, we recognize that the FCHM—like many others in the field—has had a history of favoring a narrow range of historical memory. This is in part because FCHM was founded and funded by a select few who valued the narratives of those who shared a similar socioeconomic status.

With this awareness, we seek to openly address historic underrepresentation. As a collector and curator of Freeborn County history, we understand the power FCHM has in shaping the conversation surrounding history. While FCHM has been a leader of historical research for decades, we see it as our responsibility to continue to work toward shifting the prevailing framework of what is traditionally considered to be “historically significant” to include voices and forms of documentation not previously acknowledged.

Diversity, inclusion, and equal access are fundamental principles of the FCHM. We provide a forum for difficult conversations, we host discussions that delve into these histories in all of their complexities, and we welcome people from all backgrounds to attend, question, and contribute.

Because of our commitment to a full presentation of the historical record, we aim to be inclusive, open, and fair in all that we do. Toward these ends, we practice and encourage transparent communication in all interactions. We continue to seek, engage, and employ people of all backgrounds as we foster a culture of respect, openness, learning, integrity, and honesty—especially in the face of the sometimes difficult historical truths our organization must preserve and present.

As FCHM endeavors to make the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging a cornerstone of our daily activities and long-term vision, we acknowledge that this is an ongoing process that we will never fully resolve or complete. We consider this statement a living document that will necessarily evolve as we continue to examine