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Dear Friends:

Step right up – What will it be? The plan of obsolescence or a plan of preservation? We have a choice to make. How about you?

I used to liken the Winneshiek Hotel to an old lady sitting on a bench, with her clothes disheveled and runs in her stocking and obviously disregarded and I thought, what a pity. At one point the Winneshiek Hotel was a pillar of the community and I felt compelled to do something about it.

I do not see that it is any different with East Side School Building. Countless children and adults were given a chance to better themselves through education in that building. She could go from a dowdy old lady to a resurrected thing of beauty with some effort on our part. You know she was built to educate our children, it is now necessary to turn the corner and embrace the future. The East Side could be a multifunctional community center, with meeting places for education, fundraisers and community groups. We are using high schools, colleges and museums in the town. Sometimes these are not available when needed. This could be a place of growth.

How many times have we encountered "would a", "could a", should a" in our lives? Connecting with our history is really critical to the future. Years from now our children can point to the East Side School that had lighted the way for their parents, grandparents and great grandparents and now continues to serve another generation in a different way. The choices we make now are very important in the future. It takes additional effort and vision, both to see what can be done and to do it. I see the East Side School as a link to our past with a promise to the future and we should not let go.

Please join me in the effort to make this historic building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century pillar of the community for Decorah.

Yours very truly,

  
Helen Basler