

City of La Crosse Arts Board

1. Small Project Grants

Dabikj, Srna
1420 Green Bay St., 130
Onalaska, WI 54650, US
6083977290
fokusphotolax@gmail.com

Submitted: Sep 30 2025 5:44PM



Evaluations

Overall Rating

72.86

Rating Method: Cumulative
Range: 0 - 125

88

Zachary Stensen
Oct 19 2025 11:41PM

Public Access: 22, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 23, Community Importance: 21, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 22, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"This is a well-conceived project that captures a piece of La Crosse's community photography and storytelling. The focus on the large tree in Myrick Park is unique and poetic. The project feels feasible and well-suited for the Small Grant level, and I appreciate the effort to include a zine component to extend its reach."

60

Jennifer Morris
Oct 20 2025 2:00PM

Public Access: 10, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 20, Community Importance: 15, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational

Merit: 15, Do you support moving this application forward?: No

"I think this is a very lovely idea born of a lovely story. It captures a moment in time when many of us felt, paradoxically, connected through our isolation. I hope that they are able to make this gallery show happen!"

86

Maureen Freedland
Oct 24 2025 12:21PM

Public Access: 20, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 20,
Community Importance: 23, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational
Merit: 23, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"That Cottonwood" already has a social media presence in La Crosse.

<https://www.facebook.com/ThatCottonwood>

I am also aware that the tree has "hosted" events such as a snowy New Year's Eve midnight hike, and an Easter Egg hunt for a single parent with no yard to offer. Lifting up this singular tree can have ripple effects for nature education for locals and possibly tourists as well. I would like to see a commitment however to a gallery show in 2026 at an accessible, well publicized location such as the Nature Center."

75

Mary Cate Wesling
Oct 23 2025 5:28PM

Public Access: 12, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 13,
Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational
Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"This is a great lens through which the public can look back on COVID and see a moment of beauty. Would the gallery show be free to the public? That is my only concern, that cost would prohibit attendance."

56

Paige Shafrath
Oct 26 2025 12:19PM

Public Access: 13, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 14,
Community Importance: 14, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational
Merit: 15, Do you support moving this application forward?: No

*"VISION, ARTISTIC GOALS, &
EDUCATIONAL MERIT*

3, 3, 3, 2, 4 = 15

Since the artistic concept for this proposal has already been captured, vs allowing the community to now participate, it is harder for me to understand the advancement of quality in the arts. Knowing this was during the pandemic, the timeline of focus around encouraging community participation doesn't seem to be the focus of this proposal. I am also concerned with publishing this work without the approval of Friends of the Marsh and the City of La Crosse's forestry team - have you reached out to either of these groups?

I would be curious to know the details about the zine - Who's publishing it, and is there a cost?

*DEMONSTRATED PROJECT
PLANNING & FEASIBILITY*

3, 3, 3, 2, 3 = 14

I am curious if there might be merit to moving the event to be located under the Cottonwood?

COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE

3, 4, 3, 2, 2 = 14

PUBLIC ACCESS

5, 2, 2, 2, 2 = 13

Overall, I see this project has great potential. One that has the opportunity to include several working groups, blending education, community importance, and artistic value to our community. However, with the photos already shot, there's no focus on bringing in new community members to this idea. I would suggest working with organizational (education & environmental) groups to maximize the impact of this event, as it has the potential to be something truly spectacular for the city of La Crosse."

77**Christine Kahlow**

Oct 26 2025 2:41PM

Public Access: 13, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 17, Community Importance: 24, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 23, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

68**Eva Black**

Oct 27 2025 11:17AM

Public Access: 17, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 17, Community Importance: 18, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 16, Do you support moving this application forward?: No

"While this project has great potential for Srna and Dylan, it's lacking that community outreach that is a major component to our process. Maybe there's a way to involve another organization. I'd need to see a way to involve more education or access for underserved communities.

Other details missing:

- Zine: this was mentioned, but there's nothing about it in the budget.
- Is the show location set?
- Will you be selling the pieces?"

Section 1 (SG) - Contact & Project Information

1. Name(s)/Organization

Fokus Photo, Srna Dabikj and Dylan Bonner

2. Mailing address

1420 Green Bay St. Apt #130, Onalaska WI 54650 (home) or 123 4th Street South, Studio 307, La Crosse, WI 54650 (Photo / art studio)

3. Email address

fokusphotolax@gmail.com

4. Phone number

(608) 397-7290

5. Website (optional)

www.fokus-photo.com

6. Biography

Our names are Srna Dabikj and Dylan Bonner, and you will often see us around town with a camera in hand. The best way to verbally capture the work that we strive to produce is by saying that we're trying to capture "midwest magic". Our life in La Crosse is so rich, vibrant, and exciting - and at times cold, lazy, and slower-paced. We ebb and flow with the seasons, and so do the many wonderful folks around us. It's our mission to produce work that's deeper than what you would find in a travel guide, and really bring out the magic of the people, nature, happenings in the driftless region.

7. Project Title

"Midwest Magic: Alice and the tree of wonder"

8. Brief Project Description

The year is 2020 and face-to-face gathering has been put on hold. A young girl, Alice, years for community and connection. She writes a letter to a large cottonwood tree in Myrick Park and leaves supplies for others walking through the marsh trails to write letters to the tree as well. This is a photo collection of the magic that Alice cultivated.

9. Project Start and End Dates

Aiming to do a gallery show in April, 2026

10. Requested Funding Amount

750

11. List of Participants

Srna Dabikj, Dylan Bonner

12. Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest

13. Previous Funded Projects

We have not

14. Are you a non-profit that is registered in the City of La Crosse?

No

15. Federal Tax-Exempt Status

Section 2 (SG) - Project Description

1. Project Location

Project Location - The Rivoli Arts District

2. Project Description

We would like to create a gallery show from a set of photographs that we took in 2020. The photographs depict handwritten notes that were found in the big cottonwood tree in Myrick Park. This story gets started off with a zip loc bag that contains a stack of notes in it. The outside of the bag reads "for everyone who loves the tree". Upon opening the bag, we found an introductory letter from a girl named Alice as well as a number of other letters replying to Alice, or simply speaking to the tree directly. When we took these photos we posted them to Reddit and they were so well received, with everyone asking where they could find the "big magical tree". Seeing as both the story and tree are local to us, we think that a lot of people in our community will be touched and intrigued by this photo set. There are a total of 19 photos, 17 of them are letters, one is the outside of the bag that was holding the letters with writing on it, and the last one is of the tree itself.

3. Project Execution & Timeline

For the gallery show we would like to request funds to get gallery-quality prints of the images, as well as purchase appropriate framing. Additionally, we would like to print out pamphlets / zines that visitors can take home with them, as a way to take the story of the tree with them but those don't fit in the budget so we will be self-funding them.

With the projected timeline of the show being put on sometime in April 2026, we will be working until then to gather and purchase what we need.

4. Required Materials

Frames, photo prints, zine prints

5. Durability & Maintenance Plan**6. Plans for Removal****7. Target Audience**

Community members of all ages will be engaged through the storytelling in the photographs

8. Under-Served Audience (optional)**9. Artistic Goals**

This photo series truly encompasses the notion of "midwest magic" that we strive to build our work around. This would be a fantastic way to meet more people in the community and introduce ourselves as local artists and photographers.

Media



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 1"

Size:

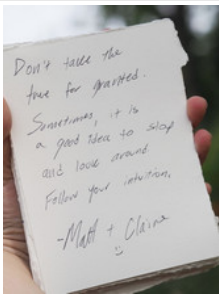
Materials/Media: Photography



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 2"

Size:

Materials/Media: Photography



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 3"

Size:

Materials/Media: Photography



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 4"

Size:

Materials/Media: Photography



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 5"

Size:

Materials/Media: Photography

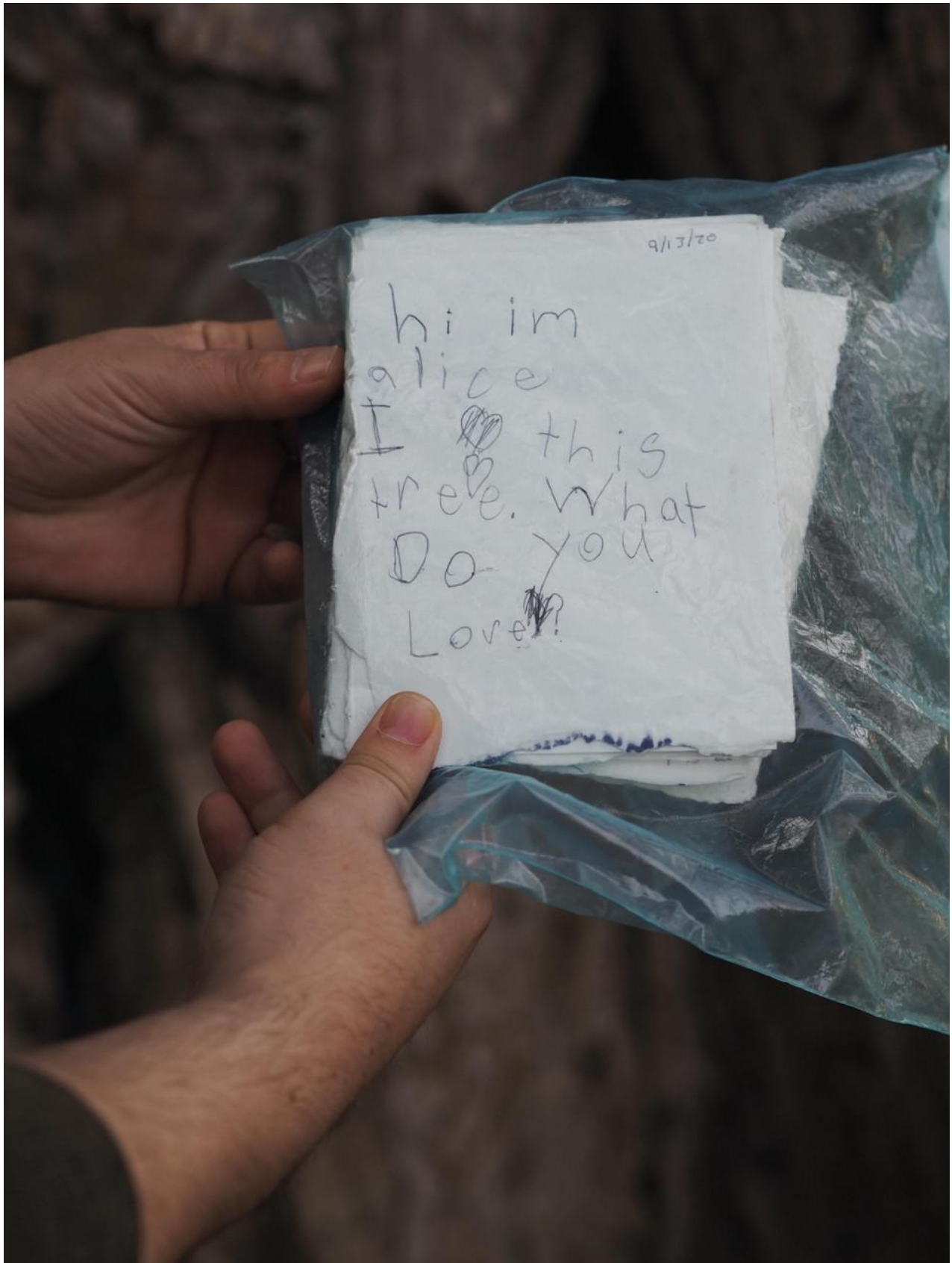
Attachments

Project Budget



18.1 KB

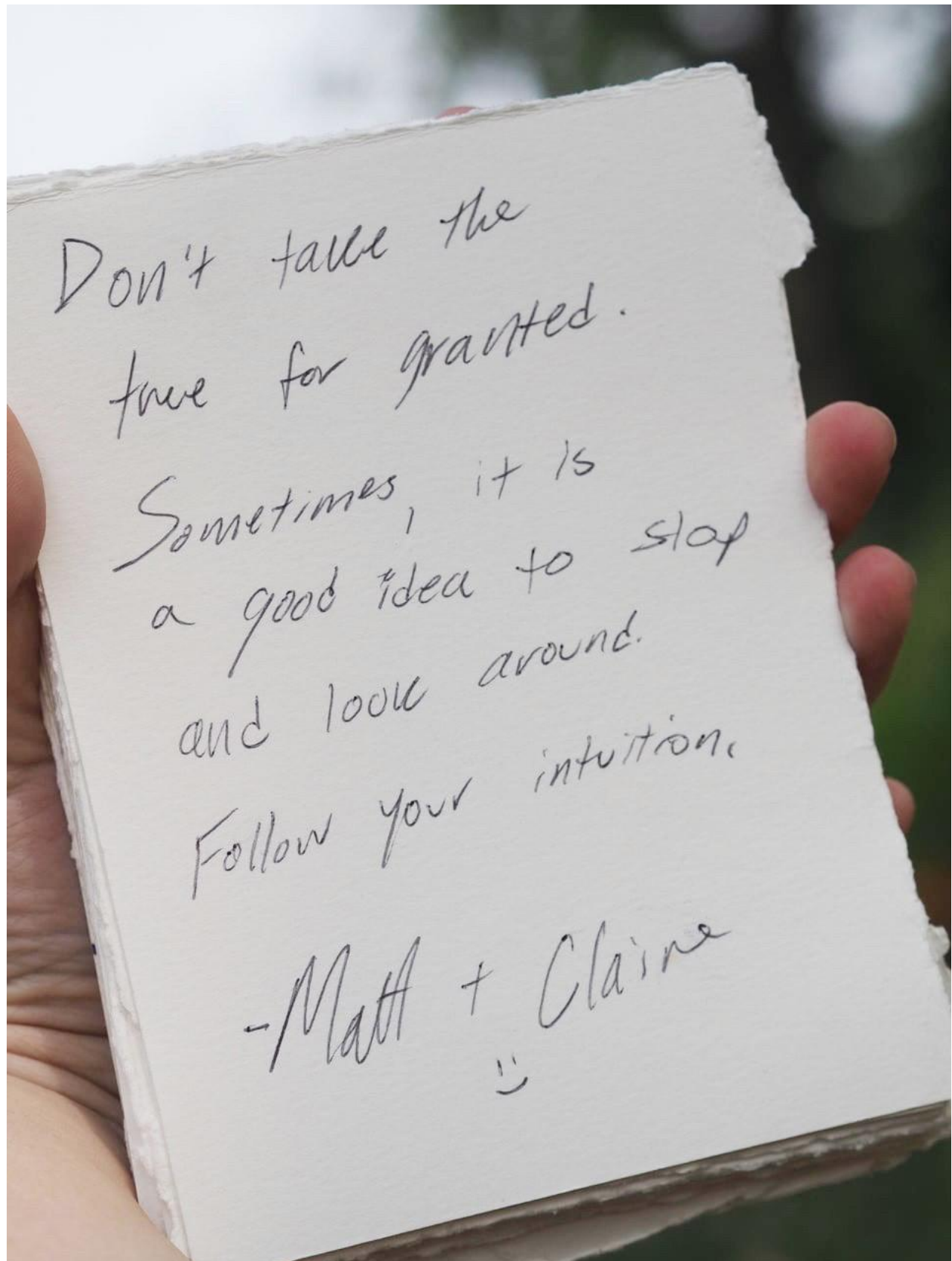
Provided by Applicant



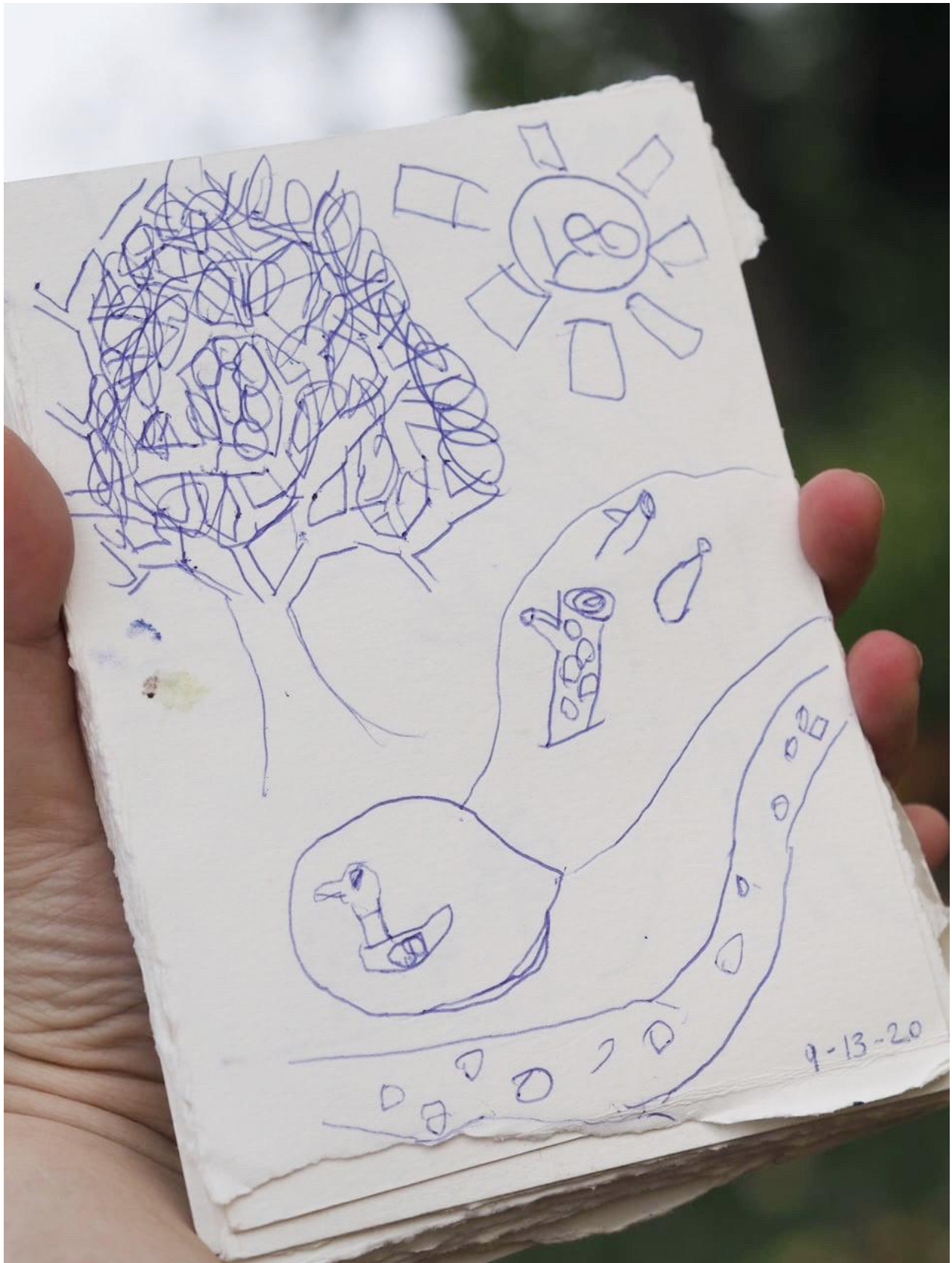
"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 1"



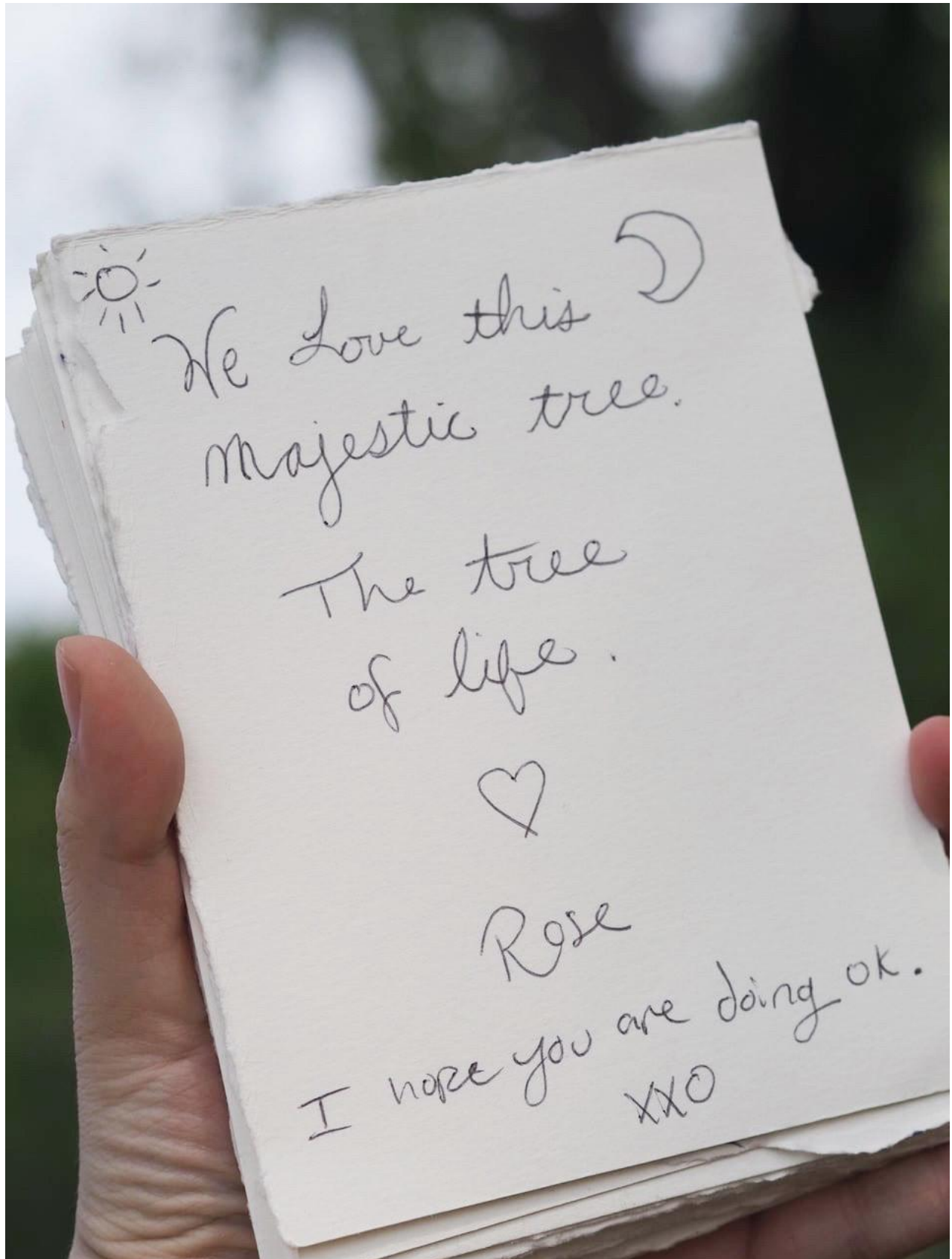
"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 2"



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 3"



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 4"



"Alice and The Tree of Wonder 5"