

FIVE ISLAND LIFE

A community inspired. This is Emmetsburg.

Dear Emmetsburg Alumni, Residents and Friends,

My name is Kelly Bay and I couldn't be more excited to introduce you to the Five Island Life Foundation. For those of you who don't know me, I'm a 1999 graduate of Emmetsburg High School. My husband Josh and I moved back to E-Hawk Nation in 2009 after the birth of our oldest son. I started my entrepreneurial journey in downtown Emmetsburg later that year and we never looked back.

What is Five Island Life?

Along with two business partners, I co-founded Five Island Life in 2017 to bring together all of Emmetsburg's amazing people, places, businesses, and events. The approach was multifaceted:

- Create a stronger sense of community in person by hosting events.
- Create a stronger sense of community online with a cohesive website promoting all Emmetsburg has to offer.
- Support small business growth and development by hosting retail events to bring customers into businesses, and offering professional marketing solutions to small business owners.

Five Island Life worked.

The website and social media accounts received thousands of visitors, hundreds attended local events such as Fun on the Five and Cool Fest, and Emmetsburg's small businesses experienced some of their highest profits ever during retail events. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure consistent funding to sustain Five Island Life, and in 2019 the company dissolved.

The company dissolved. Why are we here?

The need to invest in our community's success is more pressing than ever, particularly in our downtown business district. This historic area leading to gorgeous Five Island Lake should be the very heart and soul of our small town, but in the past year alone, Emmetsburg has lost three small businesses, and several more are for sale.

Over the years, so many of you have reached out in support of the work we accomplished with Five Island Life. I know that you want to see a thriving community with events and recreation, live music, unique stores to shop and eat. Places to share childhood memories with your children, and spaces to create new memories with friends and family.

I know this because these are the exact same things I want for our community.

It's been nearly four years since the moment I walked away from Five Island Life, but I still can't shake the vision we had when we started it.

I'm relaunching Five Island Life with a mission to revitalize downtown Emmetsburg and support local small businesses. This starts with providing immediate assistance to current downtown small business owners, advocating and lobbying to stabilize downtown infrastructure, and creating a strong sense of engagement and belonging by hosting community events.

To fund this vision, I created the Five Island Life Foundation. A Foundation membership is a three year commitment to creating swift and significant improvement in our downtown business district, while supporting small business owners throughout Emmetsburg. Attached is the proposed course of action.

Estimated annual operational costs to bring this dream to life are \$215,000 and include salaries, marketing, technology, event licenses and fees, and retail/ office space. Funds raised above annual operating costs will be dispersed as micro grants for small business owners and/or to fund projects that enhance our downtown neighborhood.

What happens after three years?

I'm calling the next three years our small business triage stage. With so many businesses for sale, the first goal is simply to stop the bleeding and stabilize our downtown business district. We'll use this time to get clear on what local businesses need to thrive, and the Foundation's vision for the future. The three year goal is to establish the Five Island Life Foundation as a non-profit organization and create a lasting legacy for Emmetsburg in the areas of small business and entrepreneurship, tourism, arts and culture, DEI, recreation, and community events.

Is public funding available?

As of 2019, public funding was not available. While that may have changed, I believe that the above course of action- starting as a private company and transitioning to a non profit- is preferable to seeking public funding. This approach allows us the flexibility to create an immediate impact on our small business community; while setting the foundation for long term success and impact no matter what changes occur in public leadership or funding.

Why Me?

In addition to owning a business in downtown Emmetsburg for nearly a decade, I received my BA from UNI in Leisure Services with a focus in tourism, outdoor recreation, and event planning. I'm also part of a nationwide network of small business owners through the Goldman Sachs 10k Small Business Program. This allows me to connect with entrepreneurs who are looking to expand their businesses into new markets, invest in commercial properties, and provide much needed knowledge and educational opportunities to the small business owners we will serve.

Most importantly, I love Emmetsburg. The years since we moved back have been the most impactful of my life. I've watched my kids grow, launched a career I love, and made so many incredible relationships. I've watched this community celebrate together, and lift each other up in times of sorrow. This town has given me so much, and I want to give back in a way that will support its success and growth for years to come.

I know how incredible the future of Emmetsburg can be, I know what it will take to make it happen, and I can't wait to get to work creating it.

When do we start?

Yesterday! In all seriousness, I've committed September-December of this year to secure funding, finalize the business plan, refresh the website, and build out the full details of 2024's action plan. However, small business coaching and support begins in September, and the first community kick off event is tentatively scheduled for October. We will be officially located and operating in downtown Emmetsburg in January 2024, if not before.

How do I contribute?

As we work on finalizing the Five Island Life website, you can view Foundation membership options and join the cause at kellybayinc.com/5foundation. If you prefer to pay by check, enclosed membership form and return it through the mail. All funds raised through the foundation will be used solely to support the mission of Five Island Life and dedicated for in Emmetsburg.

Thank you so much for your consideration in supporting Five Island Life and creating a thriving community to call home, no matter where you live now!

Cheers, Friends. Let's get this party started.

Kelly Bay

Membership Form

Options:

Founding Member

\$1000/ Year {3 Year Commitment}

Ambassador Member

\$500/ Year {3 Year Commitment}

Supporting Member

\$250/ Year {3 Year Commitment}

Contributing Member

Every dollar makes a difference; and no contribution is too big or too small.
{One Time Donation}

Member Information:

Name:

Address:

Membership Level:

Amount Enclosed:

Optional: Do you have any special instructions on how you would like your membership to appear in the member directory?

Examples: "In Loving Memory of Grandpa John" "The 1999 E-Hawk Cheer Squad" Class of '68"

Please return membership form with payment to:

Five Island Life
Attn: Kelly Bay
2601 6th St
Emmetsburg Iowa 50536

