The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark, starry night sky. The aurora appears as vibrant green and blue light curtains. In the bottom foreground, the dark silhouettes of evergreen trees are visible against the glowing light.

GRAND RAPIDS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

MATCHING CHARITABLE INTENTIONS WITH
COMMUNITY NEEDS

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2022



2022 Board Chair, Kristian Myers



2022 BOARD CHAIR NOTE

Dear Friends,

"Joining charitable intentions with community needs." Here at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation that's more than just our vision statement, that is the core of what we do every day.

In addition to being the Greater Itasca Area's philanthropic beacon, the Foundation was busy in 2022 with managing a challenging investment environment, staff transitions, internal policy updates, and analyzing procedures. Day-to-day operations were analyzed and put to the test: internally, our tag line became "Simplicity. Efficiency. Consistency." All of this, while awarding 163 scholarships worth \$249,000 to local post-secondary students, managing the ever-needed crisis funds, facilitating planned giving, promoting new and existing fund holders, and providing grants for everything from cancer treatment expense assistance to environmental needs, from supporting the arts to supporting our Veterans, from IEDC to ICTV. It's hard to not run into the GRACF circle of influence and support in our communities.

Stop by and visit the Foundation office under the black awnings on the corner of 4th Street and 1st Avenue and you'll see some new faces. Last summer brought the retirement of our Executive Director, Susan Lynch. We wish her all the best as she pursues her next chapters of community service. Filling her shoes is our former Chief Development Officer, Mindy Nuhring. Many of you will recognize her from her recent years with the Foundation, as well as the former Executive Director at River Grand Senior Living, ISD 318 board member, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and various other committees, projects, and task forces. In addition, two more friendly faces are ready to serve you: our new Program Administrator, Lori Laliberte-Ross, and our Office Manager, Lara Mlinar. All three are committed to serving the needs of the GRACF donors and recipients. In addition, GRACF has a diverse and dedicated Board of Directors monitoring the needs of the community, protecting your long-term charitable investments, and improving the quality of life for all our neighbors.

A healthy community is one in which those who have, give; those who need, receive; and those that can, do. The Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation is and will continue to be your partner in building and supporting the health and wellbeing of our entire community.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, staff, and recipients of every type, I thank you for your generous donations and overall support of the Foundation.

Kristian Myers
Board Chair 2022

2022 BY THE NUMBERS

\$28,120,652

Total Assets

\$4,228,426

Total Gifts

\$2,745,220

Grants Awarded to 932
recipients

\$249,150

164 Scholarships Awarded

ITASCA COUNTY SHARING FUND

\$183,165

352 Crisis Grants awarded

The Itasca County Sharing Fund was started at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation in 2005. The purpose of this fund is to support people with immediate, last resort, crises needs such as emergency shelter, utilities, healthcare, transportation and work clothing. Grants are intended to give the assisting agency some extra time to find more permanent solutions for their clients.

A recipient of an Itasca County Sharing Fund crisis grant says, "I received a grant from the Itasca County Sharing Fund which helped me in a very hard time of distress. I am a disabled man living in Grand Rapids and your help is very, very much appreciated. Thank you and everybody there for all of your help. You are the kindest people. There is a special place in heaven for all those who help those in need and less fortunate!!"



supported in part by

Blandin Foundation

The Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation extends a special thank you to the Blandin Foundation for providing substantial support for the Itasca County Sharing Fund, which makes a significant impact on our community.



*The above presented financial information was extracted from internal financial statements and has not yet been audited. The most current annual audit and Form 990 are available by calling us at 218-999-9100. You can also access audit information and Form 990 online at Guidestar (www.guidestar.org).

ANNUAL GRANT CYCLE

The mission of the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation is to inspire individuals and organizations to give to the community to improve the quality of life in our communities. Our annual grant cycle helps to fulfill that mission. Through our annual grant cycle, we award grants to area nonprofit organizations to meet the changing needs in our area. The annual grant cycle usually runs from July 15 through August 15 each year.

The Community Foundation helps nonprofits carry out their important work by awarding them grants, creating community partnerships, and educating donors about organizations and projects that align with their charitable interests. Through the grant process, donors' intentions are matched with charitable needs; therefore, donors make these grants happen.

The grant applications are evaluated by donors, advisory committees and the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation staff and Board. Projects and programs where a moderate grant can significantly impact the community are the focus of the evaluation committees.

The Foundation supports projects that: significantly benefit the community for the resources invested; are creative, innovative and address community needs; eliminate duplication of services and encourage cooperation; increase volunteer involvement and commitment to community needs; and leverage other resources.

In 2022, the annual grant cycle provided over \$188,000 in 47 grants to 35 area nonprofit organizations and groups that serve the Greater Itasca Area.

An example of a local nonprofit that was awarded grants in 2022 through our annual grant cycle is ElderCircle, a nonprofit that serves thousands of older adults each year so they can remain in their homes and communities. ElderCircle received grants for their Respite, Wellness, Home Visitor, and Lawn and Snow Removal programs.

Trisha Zimmerman, ElderCircle Executive Director states, "ElderCircle works to empower older adults to maintain active living and healthy independence through a variety of programs. The funds that we receive from the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation ensure that we are able to meet the increased needs within our community through programs like our Respite Program, Home Visitor Program, Wellness Program and Chore Program. We are extremely grateful for the support." If you would like more information about ElderCircle and its programs, you can visit their website eldercircle.org.



Barb Watson, Mindy Nuhring (GRACF), Audrah Huntley, Trisha Zimmerman, Lisa Randall, Lisa Rosemore and Kasey McCarroll of ElderCircle..

NEW FUNDS 2022

1. **Ann Clark and Mike McGinnis Fund**
2. **Arne Moe Memorial Archery Fund**
3. **Bob Graf Memorial Scholarship Fund**
4. **Grace House Endowment Fund**
5. **Itasca County Agricultural Association aka Itasca County Fair Board**
6. **Jack Huhta Good Character Award**
7. **Jim Gibeau Memorial Scholarship**
8. **Ride for Roger**
9. **Wabana Community Fund**

FUND SPOTLIGHT:

RESTORE A SMILE



Susan Starr Gerling

The Restore a Smile Fund at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation was established in 2015 in memory of Susan Starr Gerling, who was a local dental hygienist in the Grand Rapids area. Susan was passionate about helping others feel confident with their smiles. In the last years of her life she helped a friend of her family who was struggling with many dental problems. With Susan's help, he was able to work with her employer and come up with a plan to help him with his dental issues. He gained much in self-confidence and was so grateful to Susan for helping with this transformation, and she was happy to see him happy. Susan's friends and family then established the Restore a Smile Fund in her honor and to pay it forward.

In the years since 2015, the Restore a Smile Fund has awarded 60 grants valued at over \$45,000 to area residents to help with a variety of dental procedures which would have been out of reach for those individuals. Anesthesia for oral dental surgery is expensive and payment for it is usually required prior to treatment. These surgeries and treatments prevent further dental and health issues, prevent pain, as well as fix smiles.

We recently received a heartfelt thank you from a Restore a Smile grantee who received a grant from the fund in May of 2023. He stated that he was so grateful for the grant for dental work and that it has changed his life. "I haven't been able to smile like myself in ten years!" he said.

This fund at the Community Foundation could use your help! A donation to this fund goes directly to helping Greater Itasca Area residents and your support could make it possible to end dental pain or restore a healthy smile. Please consider making a donation to the Restore a Smile Fund. You can donate online at gracf.org/donate and search for Restore a Smile Fund. or you can also send or drop off donations to the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation. Thanks to Susan Starr Gerling's compassion and generosity, this fund continues to help others.

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

JIM GIBEAU MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Jim Gibeau served the surrounding Greater Itasca community in many ways. He served on the Grand Rapids Fire Department for almost 17 years before his passing in a work accident in 2021. Jim grew up in LaPrairie and attended Greenway High School. He played football, baseball, and hockey for Greenway High School. Jim was very involved in his community through the fire department, the Fraternal Order of Eagles and coaching. He had always been a big supporter of youth sports in Greenway, where he coached hockey and baseball.

Last year, Jim's friends and fellow firefighters at the Grand Rapids Fire Department created the Jim Gibeau Memorial Scholarship in Jim's honor. Lance Kuschel, fellow firefighter for the Grand Rapids Fire Department, says, "We do a county-wide Fire vs Law hockey game every year where all donations collected get divided up between the fire department and law enforcement. Jim was a year-in and year-out player for the fire department team in this event. Our department thought a memorial scholarship in his name would be a perfect way to honor Jim, and the annual hockey game will raise money for the scholarship. Jim gave so much to the Grand Rapids Fire Department and youth sports in Greenway and we look forward to helping local students in their education with the Jim Gibeau Memorial Scholarship."

If you'd like to help area students in Jim's memory, you can donate through the Community Foundation online at gracf.org or through the mail or in person. Scholarships are awarded to graduating Itasca County seniors who have a relative who is an active or retired Itasca County firefighter.



Jim Gibeau

THE POWER OF GIVING LOCALLY: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ACTS OF GENEROSITY

In a world that often seems divided and disconnected, there is a powerful force that can bring people together and foster a sense of unity—the act of giving back to the community. When individuals and organizations choose to give locally, they make a conscious decision to invest their time, resources, and energy in their immediate surroundings, creating a ripple effect of positive change. Here are a few ways that show the significance of giving locally and highlights the transformative impact it can have on both individuals and communities.

Building Stronger Communities

Giving back to the community strengthens the very fabric of society. When individuals contribute to local causes, whether through volunteering, donations, or support for local businesses, they actively participate in creating a thriving community. By investing in local initiatives, individuals can help build essential infrastructure, support educational programs, and improve the quality of life for all community members. This collective effort fosters a sense of pride, belonging, and social cohesion, leading to stronger and more resilient communities.

Meeting Local Needs

Every community has unique challenges and needs that can be effectively addressed through local giving. By focusing on local initiatives, individuals and organizations gain a deeper understanding of the issues affecting their community. They can then tailor their efforts to make a direct and meaningful impact. Whether it's supporting food banks, shelters, healthcare facilities, or educational programs, giving locally ensures that resources are directed where they are most needed, making a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Empowering Individuals

Giving back to the community not only benefits the recipients but also empowers individuals who engage in philanthropic activities. When people actively participate in the act of giving, they experience a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and personal growth. Volunteering or supporting local initiatives provides an opportunity to connect with others, develop new skills, and gain a broader perspective on societal challenges. These experiences can be transformative, fostering empathy, compassion, and a deepened commitment to making a positive difference.

Creating a Culture of Generosity

When individuals give locally, they inspire others to follow suit. Acts of generosity have a contagious effect, encouraging others to contribute their time, resources, and talents to support community causes. By nurturing a culture of giving, communities can tap into a collective spirit of goodwill and create a positive feedback loop. As more people get involved, the overall impact grows exponentially, leading to sustainable change and a community united in its dedication to making the world a better place.

Long-term Benefits

Investing in the local community yields long-term benefits that extend far beyond the immediate impact of individual acts of giving. By strengthening the social fabric, fostering collaboration, and addressing systemic challenges, local giving lays the foundation for lasting change. As communities become more resilient, they are better equipped to face future adversities and create opportunities for growth and prosperity. This, in turn, attracts further investment and support, creating a cycle of positive transformation that can uplift an entire community for generations to come.

Giving locally is a powerful and transformative act that not only benefits the immediate community but also has far-reaching effects on society as a whole. By investing time, resources, and energy in local causes, individuals and organizations can build stronger communities, meet local needs, empower individuals, create a culture of generosity, and foster long-term positive change. Ultimately, giving back to the community is an essential step towards creating a more compassionate, equitable, and interconnected world.



A Children's Discovery Museum program



Class of 1966 classmates: Bill Lindberg, Nancy Arnhold, Rick Blake and Rick Gould with a donation to the Forrest Willey Memorial Scholarship Fund



Greenway Area Community Fund members with their donation for the Coleraine Library

FUND/PROJECT UPDATE:

GREAT TAILS ANIMAL RESCUE BUILDING FUND



The Great Tails Animal Rescue Mission: "Great Tails Animal Rescue is dedicated to providing temporary shelter and veterinary care for stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals of Itasca County, Minnesota and surrounding areas, with the purpose of finding loving, permanent homes. Our goal is to advocate for domestic animals in our community by promoting spay and neutering, providing education and resources, and encouraging essential veterinary care, and finding loving, permanent homes for those animals."

Since November of 2019, Great Tails Animal Rescue has served the County of Itasca and surrounding areas, which covers approximately 2,928 square miles and has a population of 45,180. To date, they have taken in 850 domestic cats and dogs, with a few domestic small animals sprinkled in. The majority of these pets, when found, are homeless or unclaimed and in desperate need of veterinary care. Because of our rural area and limited access to resources, on average, Great Tails invests \$350+ per cat and \$350-\$500 per dog in basic veterinary care to prepare them for adoption. These charges vary depending on the health of the pet at intake. In our area Great Tails is not able to price their adoptions to make up for this expense, so they are reliant on donations, grants and fundraisers to cover these costs. However, even with these expenses their rescue is unique in that they have remained budget-based and currently owe no funds to any entity for which they do business.

On September 14th 2021, the Great Tails Volunteer Board went before the City of Cohasset Council to discuss purchasing land for a future shelter building. The Council surprised them by voting to donate approximately 6 acres of land in the Cohasset industrial park area. Since that time, they have researched and interviewed other local sustainable shelters for their building plans and business advice, and secured an architect who has drawn up renderings for a building design. In partnership with Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, they have also moved forward with initiating a Building Fund for their future shelter. The estimated cost for completion of the building is \$2.5 million dollars. In the last year they have raised over \$1,130,000 between matching challenges, private donors, and donations from our community members and businesses. This summer Great Tails is concentrating on a capital campaign to secure the remaining funds to start their building with a proposed ground-breaking in spring of 2024. If needed, the building will be built in phases.

Every animal that Great Tails saves is a life transformed, and you can help the Great Tails Animal Rescue mission by donating to their building fund and joining them in making the world a better place for animals...one rescue at a time.



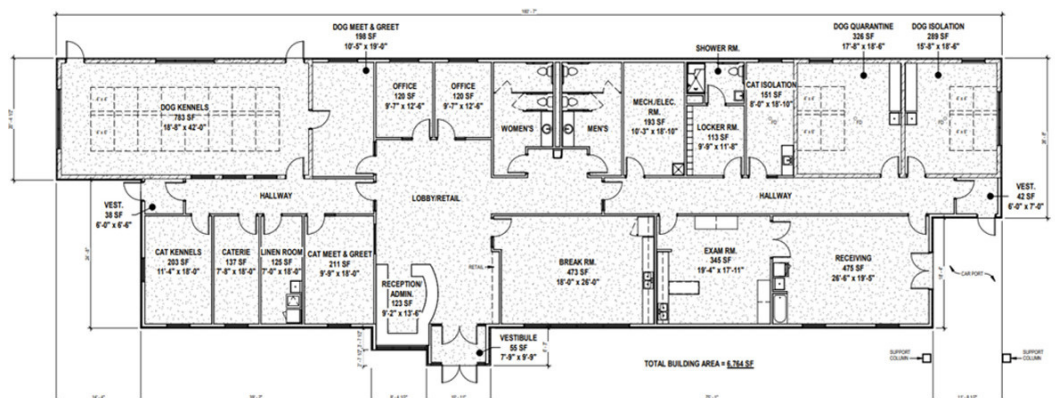
Building Rendering



Building Rendering



Location in Cohasset



Floor Plan

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

ITASCA COUNTY FAMILY YMCA

The Itasca County Family YMCA has two funds with the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation; one designated for youth and one designated for operations. Disbursements from the Youth Endowment are used for their free afterschool youth program in the Active Living Center. The Active Living Center is supervised by Y staff, and they provide afterschool snacks and activities. Many of the youth arrive at the YMCA afterschool hungry, but with no money to purchase food. The youth are greeted, offered a snack, and encouraged to participate in the healthy activities of Y membership, or they are welcome to remain in the Active Living Center and enjoy the games in the Rec Room.

The Operations Endowment is a relatively new fund, from which the Y uses the disbursements where they are needed most. This Operations Endowment was made possible by a planned gift from a generous local donor who donated \$100,000 to start the Itasca County Family YMCA Operations Endowment. This fund is designed to help the Y with operations into the future.

The YMCA has several projects in the works for which they need one-time or ongoing support. The YMCA will be expanding their childcare program and adding 64 slots at the Itasca Resource Center in the fall of 2023. Childcare is a challenging endeavor in today's environment, and the YMCA is working with local city and county governments, as well as businesses, to make this expansion a sustainable reality. Outside funding will be necessary for the next 3-5 years to help sustain this expansion.

Joni Namyst, Itasca County Family YMCA Executive Director says, "The YMCA is also working on two outdoor projects. We have received partial funding for a school-age playground which we desperately need for our afterschool and camp programming. Our current outdoor playground is designed for younger children, and older children would appreciate equipment which is more challenging. We have also received funding to add five pieces of exercise equipment around our outdoor track. We would like to add 10 pieces. This equipment would be free to our community to use as they are walking around the track. The equipment is designed to withstand Minnesota weather and would be a wonderful opportunity for our teenage and adult community members to add strength to their exercise routine." The first five outdoor pieces were funded through an Age Friendly Grant from the State of Minnesota. The purpose of the project is to create an outdoor fitness circuit designed to be inclusive of all individuals, especially those who are 50 years and older to promote community health. Additional pieces are needed to complete the project.

"The Itasca County Family YMCA greatly appreciates the funding we receive from the GRACF through our endowment distributions and other grants, as well as all of the area donors to the YMCA. We are able to expand our mission and serve more community members because of this vital assistance," Joni Namyst states.

If you would like more information on the new projects at the YMCA or you are interested in donating to those projects or YMCA operations, you can contact Joni Namyst at the Itasca County Family YMCA (218-327-1161). You can also donate directly to the YMCA Operations Endowment Fund at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation online at gracf.org or by mail or in person.



SCHOLARSHIPS!

In 2022, \$249,150 in scholarships were awarded to 164 Greater Itasca Area students!!

These scholarships were awarded through 82 different scholarship funds. That's 82 local citizens or businesses who have established scholarship funds to help area students.

Many of these scholarship funds award multiple scholarships, which leads to 164 scholarships awarded. The students receiving these scholarships graduated from eleven different area schools and also included non-traditional students. Thank you to all the donors who have established these scholarship funds and/or donated to these funds! And good luck to our area students!!

Students in the photo are from Northern Lights Community School in Warba

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COMMUNITY FUNDS



McGregor Lakes
AREA FOUNDATION

52 Grants to their communities: \$126,000 awarded

There are five area Community Funds and the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation that provide a way for citizens and businesses in those communities to give to their local area. Each Fund has an advisory committee of volunteers that oversee grants for programs and activities throughout their communities. Annual earnings derived from the invested endowment fund are granted to local non-profit organizations and provide charitable support for area citizens. The Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation is the financial managing agent for these Community Funds.

The **Deer River Area Community Fund** includes areas within and surrounding Deer River School District 317.

The **Greater Itasca Area Community Fund** is available in Bigfork, Blackduck, Cohasset, Grand Rapids, Northome, Remer, Warba and all other townships and cities within School District 318.

Greenway Area Community Fund serves the Cities of Coleraine, Bovey, Taconite, LaPrairie, Marble, Calumet, Pengilly and also the Townships of Trout Lake, Greenway, Lawrence Lake, and Nashwauk.

Hill City Area Community Fund serves Jacobson, Swartara, Palisade, Hill City, and Spang Township.

The Nashwauk Area Community Fund serves Nashwauk, Nashwauk Township, Buck Lake, Pengilly, Swan Lake, Keewatin and Goodland Township areas.

The McGregor Lakes Area Community Foundation covers territory that is geographically similar to the McGregor School District.

If you would like more information on these Community Funds or if you would be interested in being involved, please visit the Community Funds tab on our website. It will list committee members, the Community Fund website, if they have one, and you can donate to the fund.



Deer River Area
Community Fund



Greater Itasca Area
Community Fund



Greenway Area
Community Fund



Hill City Area
Community Fund



Nashwauk Area
Community Fund



McGregor Lakes
AREA FOUNDATION

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Once again, we extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you. Your kindness and generosity have made a lasting impact on our community, and we are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Together, we can continue to make a difference and build a brighter future for all.

With sincerest gratitude,

Mindy Nuhring, Executive Director
Lori Laliberte-Ross, Program Administrator
Lara Mlinar, Office Manager



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