



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

GRAND RAPIDS AREA

SPRING 2023

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation News

This issue is about how to make a difference locally

GIVE ITASCA AREA RESIDENTS A REASON TO SMILE



**THIS VALUABLE
LOCAL FUND
COULD USE
YOUR HELP!**



Susan Starr Gerling

There is a fund at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation called Restore a Smile, which 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 given 46 grants to area residents to help with a variety of dental procedures that 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.

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. If you would like to support the Restore a Smile Fund, you can donate online at www.gracf.org/donate and search for Restore a Smile Fund. You can also send or drop off donations to the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation.



How can you support the future of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association?

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA) has been building a hunting and conservation legacy in Minnesota for the last 43 years and they have nearly 20,000 members throughout the state. Their mission is to ensure the preservation and enhancement of wild deer hunting opportunities through Habitat, Education, Advocacy and Legislation. MDHA has also been planning ahead for future generations, which is why they established an endowment fund at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation. The purpose of building their endowment fund is to provide for future generations of hunters and ensure that MDHA can continue its mission.

An endowed fund differs from other funds in that the total gift is invested. Each year, only a portion of the income earned is spent while the remainder is added to the principal for growth. In this respect, an endowment is a perpetual gift. With the endowment, the fund will continue to grow, and the amount available to be spent each year will also continue to grow and provide MDHA with sustainability into the future. MDHA can use those available funds each year for programs, projects, or operations.

Garth Albers, MDHA's President, says to "please consider donating to MDHA's endowment when you are doing your estate planning to ensure MDHA's future for generations to come." Recently, the MDHA Endowment Fund has been notified of a planned gift from MDHA member, Terry Hopponen, who is donating property to the MDHA Endowment Fund. MDHA is so grateful for Terry's generosity and for leaving a legacy for future MDHA generations.

Please consider a donation to the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association Endowment Fund. You can donate through the GRACF website, www.gracf.org.





Community Foundations: Unparalleled resources for local giving with major impact



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As economic times get tough, more and more people are asking how they can make the biggest difference right in their own backyard. Indeed, local giving is a topic that has even made its way into the opinions of the mainstream media, causing many charitably-inclined people to pay more attention to the impact their dollars are having on the causes they love.

Sometimes the greatest needs really are right here at home. As donors explore charitable giving opportunities and receive requests for funding from charities near and far, it can be helpful to read first-hand accounts of why other philanthropists have been so inspired by uncovering local needs that they simply were not aware of.

Over the years, researchers have consistently validated the important emotional elements of giving to familiar and nearby organizations to foster the rewarding sense of connection that is such an important driver of repeat philanthropic behaviors. Today's donors want to be able to actually see the results of charitable investments.

Here are three suggestions for anyone who wants to get started on a "give local" journey.

First, scan the local news. Many people are very accustomed to scrolling the news feeds on phones and catching the national and international headlines. Local news can be hard to find, but those outlets do still exist! In particular, many television stations' websites include a local news tab. Spend five minutes scrolling through the local news for three days in a row, and you might be surprised at how much you learn about your own community. Make a mental note of issues that raise your eyebrows or make you ask yourself "I hope someone is doing something about that."

Second, with this research in hand, run a few quick Google searches with the key words you've identified, along with the terms "nonprofit," "charity," and the name of your town or city. Sometimes these searches will illuminate organizations you might have heard of or even be involved with already. At the very least, you will begin to frame your own description of the local causes you care about.

Third, reach out to us at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation. The Community Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life in our region, and that is possible through the work of nonprofit organizations and people like you who support them. The Community Foundation team will know which nonprofits are addressing the issues you'd like to learn more about and can provide advice about how your charitable dollar can make the greatest possible difference.

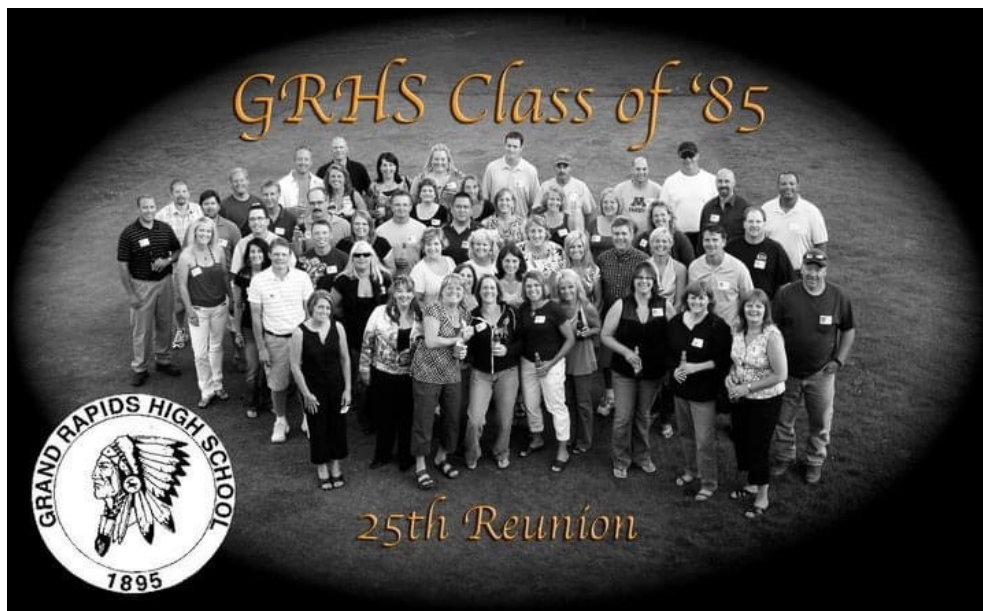
The Community Foundation is unparalleled in its ability to be flexible and responsive, providing excellent, personal service designed around your needs while at the same time working with financial advisors to ensure that you are maximizing the financial elements of your charitable giving plan.

We look forward to working with you to make as big a difference as possible in the causes you love and make our community an even better place for everyone.

New Funds

- Ann Clark and Mike McGinnis Fund
- Arne Moe Memorial Archery Fund
- Bob Graf Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Bryan Schlicht Agency, Inc. of American Family Insurance Scholarship
- Itasca County Agricultural Association aka Itasca Co Fair Board Fund
- Jack Huhta Good Character Award Scholarship
- Jim Gibeau Memorial Scholarship
- Will and Bernie Backes Fund

Thank you to the donors/fund advisors who opened these new funds with us in order to make this community a better place. See www.gracf.org for more detailed fund descriptions.



GRHS Class of 1985 Believes in Leaving a Legacy

A few years before their 30th class reunion, the Grand Rapids High School (GRHS) Class of 1985 started discussing how to honor classmates that left them too soon and the impact of their class legacy. They had valued their education at GRHS, their teachers, and had formed many lasting relationships. They wanted to find a way to honor classmates who had passed away as well as give back to the community through other GRHS students who were pursuing further education. They decided to open a scholarship fund at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, and they named it the GRHS Class of '85 Legacy Scholarship.

Fundraising for the scholarship kicked off at their next reunion and they formed a committee of approximately seven 1985 class members. Their scholarship is unique as it is not based on a student's GPA, it is available to traditional and non-traditional students as long as they graduated from GRHS, and they ask the applicants the question: "What type of legacy would you like to leave?"

The '85 classmates firmly believe that every dollar makes a difference in giving someone an opportunity to further their education. Each year the committee enjoys reading the scholarship applications and putting time and effort into picking the scholarship recipient. They have given out a \$1000 scholarship every year since the fund was established in 2015.

Ann Backes Merritt, committee member, says, "Marian Wright Edelman said it best with what our class is trying to do when she said, 'Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.'" The Class of 1985 wants to leave the lives of others and the community better than they found it. Some of their passion comes from their parents and fellow classmates who were in, or still are in, education or careers where making a positive impact in one person's life can truly make a difference.

The Class of '85 is in the process of building their fund so that it can be endowed and therefore available forever for GRHS students. Their goal is to raise an additional \$10,000. You can give as a memorial for a loved one, a one-time donation, recurring donation, stock, bonds, real estate, or through life insurance or an individual retirement account (IRA). Donations are tax-deductible.

If you are interested in helping the Class of 1985 leave a legacy, please consider donating to the GRHS Class of '85 Legacy Scholarship. You can donate through the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation website www.gracf.org/donate and search for GRHS Class of '85 Legacy Scholarship. You can also send or drop off donations to the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation. If you have questions or want to start your own legacy fund, please call the Community Foundation at 218-999-9100 or visit the GRACF website at www.gracf.org.

District 318 Endowment Fund Continues its Legacy of Enriching the Lives of District 318 Students

The District 318 Endowment Fund began as an effort led by a group of teachers who wanted to do more to engage students but were constrained by budget. In 1997, thanks to a donor's generous gift and a matching grant from the Blandin Foundation, the District 318 Endowment Fund was established. Since then, the endowment has grown to provide over \$30,000 each school year to enhance educational endeavors in District 318 classrooms. In total, the District 318 Endowment Fund has provided over \$415,000 in grants for special projects since it began.

Twenty-five years after the Fund's establishment, this extra funding is needed even more. Much has been written about a "funding gap" in education, which is described as the difference between what districts need and what they have. This is where the Endowment Fund steps in to help. The Endowment helps support all kinds of unfunded programs and projects that focus on creative analysis, problem solving, inquiry and thinking skills.

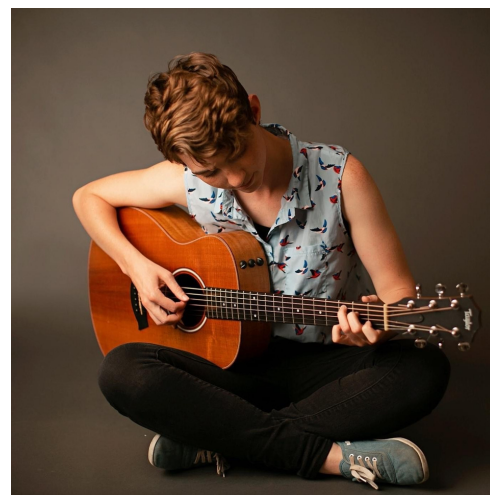
"Really, when it comes to being a teacher, you know all of the amazing things you want to do with your students and there are not many funding sources you can access. We turn to the Endowment Fund to be able to do these things that these kids would never be able to experience otherwise in school," states Jen Sjodin, District 318.

If are interested in helping District 318 teachers fund projects and programs for kids, please consider donating to the District 318 Endowment Fund. You can donate online through the Endowment Fund's website at www.legacyofgreatness.org or through the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation website.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June "First Friday" Event - Friday, June 2, from 4-7pm at the Community Foundation. Enjoy local art, music, light appetizers and beverages! If you're a donor, fund advisor, professional advisor, grantee, nonprofit, please come and say hello!
- We are planning a donor event in August and hopefully a larger event near year-end
- A Community Fund get-together is also in the works - information will be available soon
- More information and events to come



Ditty Wish will be performing on June 2nd

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For more information or to donate, call 218-999-9100, email info@gracf.org or visit our website at www.gracf.org



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