

THE Common Good

SPRING 2025

GRACF Quarterly Newsletter

Helping to make our community stronger by bringing people together to give and support local needs.



2025 SEEDS OF CHANGE CAMPAIGN



In 2024, we launched our first annual Seeds of Change campaign. Last year was our 30th anniversary and we focused on highlighting local nonprofits and the work they do. Twenty-five nonprofits applied and the community voted on their favorite. The top three were Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids/Greenway (second place winner), Great Tails Animal Rescue (first place winner), and New Beginnings Pregnancy and Family Support (third place winner).

This year, GRACF is highlighting four Field of Interest Funds:



Fund for Animals
Supporting animal welfare initiatives



Katherine T. Dodge Fund for the Arts
Enhancing arts and culture opportunities



Fund for the Environment
Protecting and preserving local natural resources



Fund for Women
Empowering women and girls in the community

These endowed funds were some of the first funds established at the Foundation and provide long-term, sustainable support to local nonprofits through our Annual Grant Cycle. Donations to these funds help grow their impact, ensuring that more money is available year after year to fund vital programs in our community.

By contributing to these funds, donors are not just making a gift—they are creating a lasting legacy. Every dollar invested in these endowments generates ongoing support for local nonprofits working to enrich our community.

MEET OUR INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS



We are excited to welcome an outstanding group of new board members to the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation! Each brings valuable experience, fresh perspectives, and a deep commitment to strengthening our community. As we continue to build on three decades of impact, their leadership will be instrumental in guiding our mission forward. Read on to learn more about these remarkable individuals and the talents they bring to our team.

Learn more →

Stay up to date
and subscribe to
our eNewsletter
gracf.org/contact-us



NEW FUNDS

- + ENCOMPASS PIPELINE SCHOLARSHIP
- + FRIENDS OF ATHLETES FUND
- + GRAND RAPIDS BOYS GOLF FUND
- + HEART TO HEART EQUESTRIAN FUND
- + JAYME "ROOSTER" WILLIAMS MEMORIAL FUND
- + PAUL FITCH MEMORIAL MINING AND ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP
- + RIDE FOR KYLE
- + SKALLMAN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

WELCOMING *new* LEADERS

MEET OUR INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS



**Amanda (Mandy)
Dick**

- CPA Partner at Glorvigen, Tierney & Co. PLLP for 23 years; specializes in small business and individual taxation, financial statement preparation, and accounting services
- St. Cloud State University in 2001
- Born & raised in Grand Rapids, MN
- Married to Jeff Dick
Children: Kiera & Alex
- Running, reading, yoga & Netflix
- Served on various Boards and Committees over the years, including the MNCPA, St. Joe's Finance Committee, Blandin Foundation Scholarship Committee, and the Chamber Ambassador Committee



**Corinne
Ivanca**

- Senior Associate General Counsel at Allina Health System where she handles litigation and provides legal advice related to the provision of healthcare
- Returned to hometown of Grand Rapids, MN in 2020; spent many years in Northeast Minneapolis prior
- Partner, Joel, is a public defender
Children attend ISD 318 schools
- Spending time with family, outdoor activities, pickleball & CrossFit
- Worked in various roles as a professional liability litigation attorney since 2006



**Megan
MacDonell**

- Owns Triple C Company, specializing in business consulting, executive coaching, and culinary styling; career began in bank operations, and she has since gained extensive experience in the hospitality, retail, and professional services industries, as well as small business operations and entrepreneurial support
- Cooking, baking, & spending quality time with her family and dog, Luke
- Co-leader of a women's retreat in Northern Minnesota that focuses on resetting, self-development, fostering a vibrant community of women from across the nation, and addressing the individual needs of participants



**Jared
Whight**

- Independent financial advisor and real estate investor
- B.S. in Accounting from the University of North Dakota and spent 12 years in public accounting, earning his CPA
- Returned to hometown of Grand Rapids, MN in 2020
- Married to Erin Whight
- Hiking with his two dogs, splitting firewood, geeking out over building science, and relaxing on the lake with family and friends
- Worked with a wide range of both for-profit and non-profit businesses, as well as numerous individual tax engagements



100+ WOMEN EVENT UNITES ITASCA AREA TO SUPPORT LOCAL NON-PROFIT



More than 160 women gathered on May 5 at the Timberlake Lodge in Grand Rapids for the inaugural 100+ Women Who Care – Itasca Area event, a powerful evening of collective giving. The group raised **\$17,170** to support Advocates for Family Peace, a local nonprofit that provides safe shelter and supportive services to individuals impacted by intimate partner violence.

The event was made possible by a dedicated Steering Committee of 12 local women: Bonnie Drake, Tracy Hensley, Mary Ives, Carmen Jackson, Nancy Jacobson, April Jespersion, Tami Kottke, Mindy Nuhring, Jodi Piekarski, Lisa Randall, Danielle Schermerhorn, and Danielle Witherill. "This group of women had never worked together before," said Mindy Nuhring of the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, "but it's incredible what a united purpose can accomplish."

Each attendee donated \$100 or more and voted on one of three nominated nonprofits randomly drawn from a pool of submissions. Advocates for Family Peace, Itasca County Family YMCA, and Great Tails Animal Rescue were selected, and a non-employed representative from each organization gave a brief, three-minute presentation to share its mission and impact. Advocates for Family Peace received the most votes and will use the funds to help women facing domestic abuse during a time of uncertain funding.

"The work we do is so very important to our community, assisting women through some of the hardest times of their lives," said Colleen Chapin, Executive Director of Advocates for Family Peace. "We do the work within the constraints of extreme confidentiality and protection of our survivors, and so, sometimes we feel isolated; knowing that the women in our community not only know about us but support our organization in such a way is very uplifting and heartwarming to our staff."

Knowing that the women in our community not only know about us but support our organization in such a way is very uplifting and heartwarming.



COLLEEN CHAPIN
Executive Director
Advocates for Family Peace

Visit our blog for the full article

*Save the Date
for the next event!*

October 13, 2025 • Timberlake Lodge
All women are welcome to attend

For more information and to get involved, follow the 100+ Women Who Care – Itasca Area Facebook page



MY 'WHY'

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOARD

Why? Why Not?

When asked why I give my time to GRACF, I tend to blurt out an excessive heap of fragmented thoughts. I get too excited about the chance to share anything, that I share EVERYthing. In each conversation, though, the same base reason is always the same. The GRACF helps people. The foundation touches thousands of lives. Whether fund, scholarship, or grant related, the foundation work helps to address hunger, homelessness, illness/healthcare support, education, environmental topics, and more; and most of the Itasca area population has been impacted by it. There are hundreds of funds, thousands of people helped, and millions of dollars gifted.

When I see the impact made by our community foundation, my heart weighs heavy with the awareness of people hurting, hungry, displaced, in need. But then I am also awe-struck by the generosity of so many in our community. The dedication of the people who are giving their time to help others humbles me. The savvy and expertise of those creating programs or envisioning the path to a better future inspires me. The selflessness of those donating to fund these efforts blows me away. The gifts which have been given by these generous community members have enabled the existence of the foundation and its impact in our community. It is a remarkable sight to behold. So of course I want to be involved! If I can take even a small action and help another fellow human being, why wouldn't I?

As John Pavlovitz says, "At the end of your life, this world will either be a more or less compassionate, loving, caring place because of your presence. Your move."

So, why give my time to the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation? Well, why NOT?



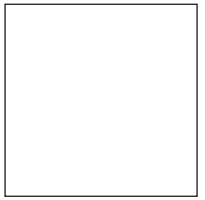
JAMIE BROWN, Vice Chair
GRACF Board Member
since 2023



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

GRAND RAPIDS AREA

350 NW 1st Avenue, Suite E
Grand Rapids, MN 55744



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Diane Larson, Chair
- Jamie Brown, Vice Chair
- Peter McDermott, Treasurer
- Christina Andersen, Secretary
- Shannon Benolken, Past Chair
- Elena Cowan
- Amanda Dick
- Corinne Ivanca
- Megan MacDonell
- Jerry Ophoven
- Roy Smith
- Jared Whight

STAFF

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



gracf.org

Seeds of Change HARVEST FUN(D) FEST

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | BARN IN THE WOODS

Food • Fun • Community

To become a sponsor, purchase tickets,
and for more information visit
gracf.org/news-media/seeds-of-change
or scan the QR code



**Sponsorship
Opportunities Available**

- PLATINUM PARTNER \$5,000+
- GOLD LEAF \$3,000-\$4,999
- SILVER LEAF \$1,000-\$2,999
- GREEN LEAF \$500-\$999

FIRST FRIDAY

AT THE GRAND RAPIDS AREA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

JUNE 6 • 4-7PM

ART
MUSIC
FOOD

SUSAN CLANDON

DAN RIGONI

TRIPLE C COMPANY