



CELEBRATING IMPACT

IN MUSKEGON COUNTY



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
for Muskegon County



LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

As we enter the **third year** of the Community Foundation's strategic plan, we celebrate the successes and acknowledge the collective efforts of many community partners and donors.

We highlight several people and organizations in this report. You will find stories of people like you and me who appreciate their blessings and look to the future with a **promise for a better tomorrow** for all.

In addition to our commitment to downtown Muskegon and arts through the Frauenthal Center, the Community Foundation works collaboratively throughout the community. We celebrate partnerships driving systemic change through strategic efforts to:

- **Develop literacy skills** and improve access to quality education.
- **Strengthen individuals and families** through access to housing and affordable childcare.
- **Promote economic prosperity** through entrepreneurship and small business supports.
- **Foster a community of trust**, where all voices are welcome and valued.

Together, as we walk alongside one another, the people of Muskegon County can look to the future with **hope and opportunity**.

We look forward to tomorrow's adventures.

Sincerely,

Todd Jacobs
President/CEO

Dick Kamps, M.D.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021

(including our Mason County affiliate)

Gifts Received:

\$16,509,208

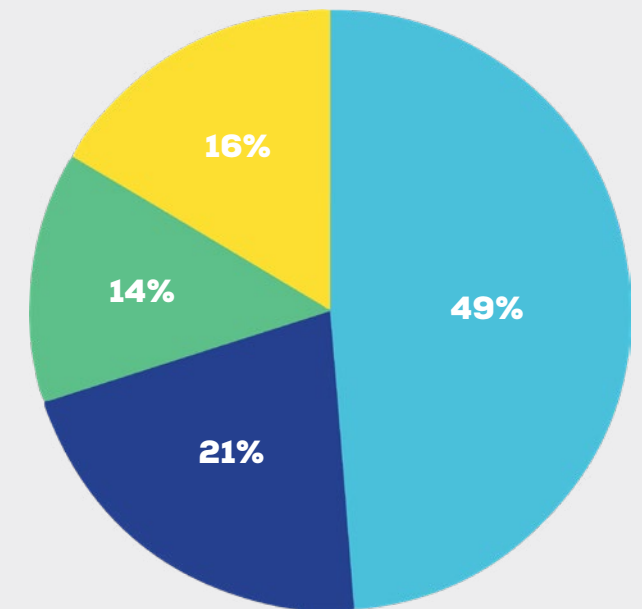
Grants and Scholarships Awarded:

\$11,341,113

Total Assets:

2021: \$275,928,683

2020: \$246,649,452



Strategic and Discretionary Funding:

- Advancing Educational Attainment
- Enhancing Community Trust and Promoting Prosperity for All
- Fostering a Dynamic, Local Economy
- Frauenthal Center

CELEBRATING EDUCATION

MAISD LITERACY COACH PROJECT

The MAISD, local school districts, and the Community Foundation partnered to place a literacy coach in public school districts in Muskegon County. The literacy coaches support kindergarten through third-grade educators, **developing literacy strategies** aimed at

improving student learning. The goal is for children to enjoy all things that result from becoming **confident, lifelong readers and writers.**

During the first year of the literacy program, the eleven coaches built relationships within their districts with

school staff and students. These relationships elevated the high-quality lessons and delivery methods to **increase reading and writing skills for youth.**

"Our early literacy coaching project has gone **beyond our expectations** in the first year. These coaches have built great relationships in their schools and have helped teaching staff grow and learn."

- Randy Lindquist, Superintendent MAISD

Hear from the literacy coaches!



KICKSTART TO CAREER

Did you know? The Community Foundation invests \$50 in an account for every kindergarten student in the county to kickstart savings towards their future college or career.

GOAL: TO BUILD FINANCIAL LITERACY AS WELL AS HOPE FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Reeths Puffer Elementary students visit Family Financial Credit Union to make deposits into their **KickStart to Career** accounts.



RAQUISHA HALL, SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



"I worked at the hospital as a CNA for several years, and this award helped me take the next step towards my **R.N. Degree.**"

- Raquisha Hall, Scholarship Recipient

ADULT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

While navigating barriers such as working and childcare, 21 Muskegon County adult students received **\$33,700 in scholarships** to support their continued education efforts.



GOAL: TO BUILD LIFE-LONG LITERACY

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LISTENING LOCATIONS

Historically, the Community Foundation has been heavily involved with the revitalization of downtown Muskegon. As downtown continues to grow, the Community Foundation is fulfilling the strategic plan to **bring support to all areas around Muskegon County**. One way we connect with areas is by listening to the voices of the individuals who live, work, and play in our community.

The Community Foundation launched its first-ever **Listening Location** in October 2021 at the Us Cafe in Muskegon Heights. Each month visiting residents share stories that provide valuable insight into the needs and values of community members. Community Foundation staff have also visited the Whitehall and Montague area. The insights gained help the Community Foundation identify future partnership opportunities while staying connected to the greater community. (Photo 1)



1



2

"Growing up, not many of us got to witness minority entrepreneurs, especially in the smaller community. This event **showcases the potential that we have** and what we are capable of accomplishing."

- Jennifer Ross

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT SMALL GRANTS

Community Empowerment Small Grants (CESGs) is one strategy the Community Foundation uses to build a vibrant community with great opportunities for all. These grants are designed to **empower organizations seeking to foster change** across our county. CESG grantees are strengthening community partnerships, building relationships, and providing hope and opportunity to many people throughout Muskegon County.

BUY BLACK WEEKEND

In 2020 Jennifer Ross started the Buy Black Weekend initiative to **support black-owned businesses** in Muskegon County. The annual Buy Black Weekend encourages people from around the area to become familiar with the products and services the Black-owned businesses offer. The publicity from the event increases sales on the weekend of the event, while keeping these businesses top of mind throughout the year. With the first event's success in 2020, Jennifer sought funds from the Community Empowerment Small Grant program to **support entrepreneurs and small businesses** through this growing event. (Photo 2)



3

FAITH PARTNERS

The Community Foundation began meeting with faith partners in August 2021 to explore strategies to promote and strengthen lifelong literacy. Faith leaders gathered regularly listening to speakers, networking with nonprofits, and building programs. In April 2022, the Community Foundation awarded close to **\$25,000 to support 11 churches and 12 programs** designed to enhance the literacy skills of adults and children. (Photo 4)



4



5

Faith Partners Grant Recipients Include:

1M Project – Central United Methodist, Bethany Church, COGIC Community Center (Holy Trinity), Fellowship Church, Greater Anointing Apostolic Faith Ministries, Holton United Methodist Church, Lake Harbor United Methodist Church, New Life Christian Center of Muskegon, Ravenna Free Methodist Church, Saint Gregory's Episcopal Church, and Zion Tabernacle House of God.

MUSKEGON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Recently the Muskegon Heights Neighborhood Council (MHNAC) was founded. MHNAC has representatives from every neighborhood in Muskegon Heights. This collaborative group discusses needs for their blocks and works together to **gain access and create proximity to community resources**. One of MHNAC's initiatives supported by the Community Empowerment Grant was to develop marketing materials to spread the word about the services and resources available to residents. When asked why creating marketing materials was important, MHNAC informed the Community Foundation that having **"trusted communication channels to and from residents is vital."** (Photo 5)

TAKING BACK MUSKEGON

The Muskegon Heights Housing Commission and **Taking Back Muskegon**, a local volunteer organization, partnered to host a youth summer program. The program included **field trips** to local museums, Michigan's Adventure and **community service projects**. Taking Back Muskegon uses grant funds to elevate programming and utilize partnerships with Kids Food Basket and the YMCA. (Photo 3)

CELEBRATING THE NEXT 90 YEARS

FRAUENTHAL CENTER PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN

For the last 90 years, the **Frauenthal Theater** has been the cornerstone of Downtown Muskegon. The Frauenthal's impact ripples through a diverse range of arts and entertainment experiences for West Michigan and beyond. Since the original renovation nearly 30 years ago, the Frauenthal Theater has been showing wear from ongoing use. The Community Foundation identified fundamental structural and preservation issues critical to the theater's future.

The Community Foundation launched the **Next 90 Years Campaign** to ensure these renovations keep the landmark accessible for generations. The campaign cabinet, led by Co-Chairpersons, Amy Heisser and Asaline Scott, have successfully **raised \$6.4 million**. Many renovations are complete, with more on the way. Some of the most noticeable renovations include exterior terracotta restoration, historically accurate, energy-efficient windows installed, HVAC system replacement, fire/emergency escape routes repaired and reinforced, marquee renovation, heated sidewalks, with new sound system and main stage to come.

CAMPAIGN CABINET MEMBERS:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Chuck and Vivian Johnson <i>Honorary Chairpersons</i> | • Jan Deur | • Dr. F. Remington Sprague |
| • Amy Heisser and Asaline Scott <i>Campaign Co-Chairpersons</i> | • John Essex | • John and Mary Swanson |
| • Hon. Maria Ladas Hoopes <i>Frauenthal Center Committee Chair</i> | • Roger Morgenstern | • Priscilla and Rick Wilcox |
| | • Marvin and Connie Nash | • Tom and Jane Witt |
| | • Dale and Connie Nesbary | |
| | • Steve and Deb Olsen | |
| | • Kay Olthoff | |

THE FRAUENTHAL FOREVER

Jim and Joyce Muston were Muskegon residents who loved the Frauenthal and spent much of their free time volunteering during events. Their devotion was evident in their **20 years as Friends of the Frauenthal** members. Most years, Jim and Joyce were on the Frauenthal's list of volunteers who logged the most hours, becoming a staple on show nights. Jim passed in 2015, and with Joyce's passing in 2019, the **Jim and Joyce Muston Fund** was created from their bequest as a permanent resource to support the Frauenthal Center.

A portion of the Next 90 Years Campaign included building an endowment. We are grateful to those like Jim and Joyce Muston, who support the Frauenthal today and for the Next 90 Years.



2022
RECIPIENTS

Amy Heisser and
Asaline Scott

PATRICIA B. JOHNSON AWARD

For 21 years, the Community Foundation has honored the work of its founding president and CEO by presenting the annual Patricia B. Johnson Community Leadership Award to recognize dynamic individuals or an organization with **outstanding leadership and innovation**. This year's recipients have spent their lifetimes improving the quality of life for others in our community. They are recognized for co-chairing the **Frauenthal's preservation campaign**, an institution close to Pat Johnson's heart.

CELEBRATING IMPACT



IMPACT AWARD

Muskegon County residents make an impact on our community every day. To celebrate their impact, the Community Foundation developed an annual award presented at the **2021 Annual Gathering**. The Annual Gathering welcomes everyone in Muskegon County to come together and honor the work being done to create a vibrant community with great opportunities for all.

The Impact Award recognizes an individual or organization in the community who has **gone above and beyond** to advance education, foster a

dynamic local economy, and promote prosperity for all. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County awarded **Dr. Dale Nesbary** the inaugural Impact Award!

For more than 13 years, Dr. Dale Nesbary has served as the president of Muskegon Community College (MCC). His many accomplishments include securing more than **\$45 million** to support the most ambitious upgrade of MCC's facilities since the construction of the main campus in 1967. Under Dr. Nesbary's leadership, MCC was twice named the **top Community College in**

Michigan. Nesbary worked alongside the MAISD to make the Promise Scholarship possible for Muskegon County students, and alongside the MCC Board of Trustees to create the **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**. This office serves as a resource to nonprofits and small businesses.

LEARN MORE!



FUTURE IMPACT

Judy Drew Rahrig grew up in downtown Muskegon. She and her late husband, Joe, were high school sweethearts, and one of their first dates was at the Michigan Theater, now the Frauenthal Center. Muskegon was good to their family and business, and it was **important to them to give back**.

Working alongside her financial advisor, Bob Garretson, and their family estate attorney, George Johnson, Judy created funds at the Community Foundation. She used tax-free distributions from her IRA to create an **Unrestricted Fund**.

Judy gave appreciated stock to create a **Donor Advised Fund** that she can use as her primary giving vehicle. She has also planned a **future estate gift** from her IRA.

"We have three children," said Judy. "Instead of splitting it 33-33-34%, I decided to leave each of them 30% and give the remaining **10% to the Community Foundation**."

*"The alignments between **your work**, **your community**, and the ways you can **give back** are endless."*

- Bob Garretson, Financial Advisor



JOE AND JUDY RAHRIG

*Anyone has the capacity to have a major impact. Everywhere I've lived, I've never seen people with more capacity than here. **Do the work.** Don't assume that a small community means you can't do it. **You have the capacity.** Find the right people and focus on what you want to accomplish. **Be the change you want to see.***

- Dr. Dale Nesbary
2021 Impact Award Recipient





To start a fund of your own now

or through your estate, contact

development@muskegonfoundation.org

CELEBRATING NEW FUNDS

Thank you to the following people who notified us of **planned gifts** through their estates or created **new funds** in 2021. These gifts will do great things in our Muskegon County community...**forever.**

The most powerful gifts are unrestricted, as they are flexible to meet the community's greatest needs and strategic opportunities now and in the future. We give special thanks to those who give to

the **Greater Muskegon County Unrestricted Fund** and who have created **Strategic Funds (noted with *)**. Strategic Funds are either Unrestricted or focused on one of our three strategic areas of Education; Community and Economic Development; or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A gift of \$5,000 or more creates the fund right away, or it can be built over time with a committed annual gift of at least \$500.

PROMISED GIFTS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| • Dale and Sue Beattie | • Randy and Beth Kunish | • Susan J. Sawyer |
| • Linda Bouwman | • Daniel and Nina Leask | • Angelita Valdez |
| • Bob and Jackie Engel | • Jeff and Lisa Lohman | • Scott Vander Ploeg |
| • Petie Hunt | • Marvin and Connie Nash | |
| • Carol Mills and Paul Kissel | • Judy Rahrig | |

NEW FUNDS

*Steven and Kathryn Bandstra Fund:

Longtime donors to the Community Foundation's Greater Muskegon County Fund, Steve and Kathy chose to create a Strategic Fund in their names, focused on education.

Brian Barber Education Fund:

Brian Barber was a key proponent in creating the Muskegon Area Promise. Upon Brian's sudden passing, a group of his friends and colleagues decided to build a permanent fund to support education efforts in Muskegon County in Brian's memory.

Business Equity Initiative Fund:

After studying inequities in local and national economic systems, Nancy McCarthy, Mary Anne Gorman, and Kim Suarez got to work. They started this non-endowed fund - and are seeking support for it - to create opportunities and close funding gaps for women entrepreneurs, supporting job creation and an economy that works for all.

*Jane Altman Cirona Fund:

A longtime financial advisor in Muskegon, Jane started this fund as a Build a Fund. Now fully funded, this Unrestricted Fund will support the needs of the Muskegon County community now and into the future.

*Mark and Jennifer Ellis Fund:

Mark and Jennifer are Grand Rapids residents who summer in Muskegon, and they have been generous with their second community! Steady annual gifts led to creating a Strategic Fund focused on education because they know it's the pathway to success.

Robert and Jackie Engel Fund:

A financial advisor, Jackie has helped several of her clients establish funds and future estate gifts with the Community Foundation. Now, she and Bob love that they've established their own Donor Advised Fund, paired with a planned estate gift.

Jameson and Amy Goorman Family Fund:

Jameson is a CPA who maximizes tax savings by "bunching" stock gifts to their Donor Advised Fund in alternating years. He and Amy then use the fund to provide steady support for their favorite causes.

Dave and Linda Gritter Fund:

Using the Required Minimum Distributions from their IRA, Dave and Linda created a Field of Interest Fund which will support the many areas of community life that are important to them. They've also planned a gift from their estate to add to the fund.

*Bob and Elaine King + Noah Miesch Fund:

Roberta King directed a portion of her parents' estate to create this Unrestricted Fund in their memory as well as that of her son, Noah.



NEW FUNDS

Robert and Denise Kwiecien Fund:
After consistently giving to their Build a Fund for a few years, Bob and Dee are now ready to use their Donor Advised Fund to support some of their favorite organizations. In particular, they will support Harbor Hospice where Dee worked for nearly 20 years.

North Muskegon Public School Library Endowment Fund:
With a desire for books focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, a group of school supporters came together to create this Advised Fund. It ensures permanent, yet flexible, resources will be available to purchase books for classrooms and the school library.

***Fidelis R. Dion O'Toole Fund:**
Molly O'Toole Parker and her husband, Steve, established this Unrestricted Fund to honor Molly's late mother. Mrs. O'Toole was a lifelong Muskegon resident, and a nurse at Mercy Hospital. Gifts to this fund came in from across the country, including from some of Fidelis' 62 grandchildren!

Pulaski Lodge Fund and Scholarship Fund:
After decades in Muskegon, the Pulaski Lodge organization disbanded. They donated the remainder of their assets to create two funds: one to support Muskegon's annual Public Safety Youth Fishing Derby and veterans causes, and one to provide scholarships.

***Joseph and Judith Rahrig Family Fund and Advised Fund:** See story on **page 10**.



***Janice Stone Fund:**
Jan grew up in Fruitport and went on to have a successful career in nursing and hospital management in other communities. She retired to Norton Shores a few years ago, excited for Muskegon's resurgence and eager to volunteer. Though cancer took her in March of 2021, Jan left a portion of her estate to the Community Foundation. The Janice Stone Fund is supporting the Frauenthal Theater Preservation Campaign in addition to providing unrestricted, permanent resources for the community she loved.

***George and Marianne Swick Fund:**
Grateful for a "very good long life," Marianne chose to give a generous gift to the community her family has called home since 1972. She used a combination of appreciated stocks and Qualified Charitable Distributions from her IRA to create this Unrestricted Fund, and she gave an extra gift to the Frauenthal Theater Preservation Campaign. While George passed away in 2017, this fund will ensure their legacy in Muskegon lives on.

West Michigan Symphony Endowment Fund:
With endowment being part of their "Play Your Part" campaign, the symphony created this new fund to help ensure their presence for future generations.

"The **impact from Diatribe** can be seen
and felt because many [members]
have continued to write and **express**
themselves in a healthy way with poetry."
- Anonymous Diatribe Mentor

CELEBRATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

WHAT ARE OUR YOUTH SAYING?

The Muskegon County Youth Advisory Council (YAC) surveyed **461 high school students** in Muskegon County to understand the issues impacting them today. The Youth Empowerment Survey (YES) findings identified three areas where they will allocate future grant awards:

- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Racial Discrimination

YAC is a collective of youth grantmakers who represent 16 Muskegon-area high schools. This team meets monthly to allocate **over \$60,000** to local youth-serving organizations and projects. When YAC isn't grantmaking, it's planning community service projects and site visits to the organizations it funds.



"Diatribe's work with our MCEC
student body was **transformative**."
- Chauncy Williams
MPS Career and College Facilitator

POWER OF THE ARTS

Diatribe is a local non-profit organization that uses performing arts to **empower young people** to share their stories, raise awareness of social issues, and create change within their communities. Diatribe connects with youth in a creative way that helps work through mental health challenges, and is proven to help students improve their English and writing skills. Diatribe has been present in various schools and programs, including Muskegon Community Education Center, the Poppen Program, Orchard View, Muskegon Public Schools, North Muskegon, Muskegon Heights Public School System, and Pathfinders.





LEAD MUSKEGON GIVING CIRCLE LEADING EFFORTS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The LEAD Muskegon Giving Circle enhances **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)** work in Muskegon County. This growing group of diverse members, aged 50 and under, meet regularly to share DEI-focused resources and discuss current issues. Each member is committed to giving a **gift of \$400 each year**. Half of the funds stay in the LEAD Fund to build the endowment; members vote on a non-profit partner to receive the other half to support DEI work in Muskegon County.

In 2021, LEAD members voted to grant Legal Aid of Western Michigan funds to support local expungement clinics.

*Being part of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County LEAD Steering Committee, I can continue to be a part in **investing and growing** the much needed **diversity, equity and inclusion** work of Muskegon County.*

- Eli Briseño, LEAD Muskegon Member

This growing group is welcoming new members to join the cause. If you're interested, contact development@muskegonfoundation.org.

*"I am finding business and community members are **eager and invested** in Muskegon County growing their education and intentionally being **inclusive of everyone.**"*

- Ken James, Chief Diversity Officer



MCC OFFICE OF DEI

Together, the Community Foundation, the City of Muskegon, Goodwill Industries, Mercy Health, United Way of the Lakeshore, Shape Corporation, and the Howmet Aerospace Foundation **raised over \$170,000** to support the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Muskegon Community College.

The newly appointed Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), Ken James, has begun implementing a DEI strategy to catalyze best practices and resources across the campus and our community. One of Ken's goals is to ensure that **ALL INDIVIDUALS** can thrive and be engaged here in Muskegon County.

In 2022 Ken plans to expand the DEI Office to push out more training opportunities. Additionally, Ken is working to obtain grants for a racial dialogue, similar to the Institute for Healing Racism, and to offer more one-on-one training in the coming years.

*"I will be bringing the **lens of DEI** to stakeholder groups: MCC Students, MCC Faculty/Staff, the community-at-large, government and non-profit organizations, and the business community."*

- Ken James, Chief Diversity Officer

Since the opening of the DEI office in September of 2021, Ken James has:

- Communicated with over 110 stakeholders through an informal assessment and listening tour.
- Is offering three different DEI curriculums for community training sessions.
- Has trained more than 300+ people on DEI.
- Has collaborated with the organizers of MLK Unity Breakfast Day and the Inclusive Leadership Academies.

FARM, AGRICULTURE, RESEARCH, AND MANUFACTURING (FARM)

The Greater Muskegon Economic Development, West Michigan Food Processing Association, Muskegon Community College (MCC), and the Community Foundation have worked collaboratively to create the Food, Agriculture, Research, and Manufacturing facility (FARM). FARM, a 8,000-square-foot facility, is operated in partnership with Michigan State University Extension/MSU Product Center Services (MSU). Collectively, they bring **resources and business supports** to growing agribusinesses operating out of FARM and link college students (MSU and MCC) with entrepreneurs.

Located on MCC's campus, the center is an accelerator and business development center targeting first and second-stage food processors. The businesses have grown out of small kitchen spaces, such as Kitchen 242, but aren't ready for a larger processing facility. Since opening in early 2021, three food processors have called FARM their home, receiving business support and technical assistance.

The photo to the right showcases **Fry Daddy's Brand Party Mix** at FARM. Fry Daddy's Brand first sold their family recipe of irresistible mixes to family and friends, then to our community at local Farmers Markets. With an overwhelming response from the community, owners Dan and Morgan Buehler are utilizing FARM to grow their business to the next level. You can now find Fry Daddy's Brand in Meijer stores around Michigan.



INVESTING IN HOUSING

The City of Muskegon has partnered with the Community Foundation and local businesses to provide new housing and **revitalize the Jackson Hill neighborhood** with an in-fill housing pilot. The Community Foundation has provided needed bridge-financing, in the form of a loan.

The project invests in a neighborhood with many vacant, buildable lots with the goal of stabilizing the neighborhood, increasing home values, and growing the number of owner-occupied residences. It has been important to the City of Muskegon to provide the opportunity to builders, realtors, and buyers that reflect the neighborhood. This project aligns with the Community Foundation's strategic goals by fostering a dynamic, local economy, empowering people to build assets, and intentionally including local-owned minority businesses.

Jackson Hill resident Rudy Briggs, Briggs Enterprises Construction Company is the general contractor, and Muskegon resident Terri Kitchen, the realtor, were hired by the City of Muskegon to complete the project. Before construction was complete, the first two homes sold at a market rate allowing the City to reinvest funds in new construction projects as the pilot continues.



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FOR GOOD. FOR EVER.

Your gift to the Community Foundation will **make an impact**, today and in the future. If everyone leaves 5% of their estate to a Community Foundation fund, **over \$680 million** will be invested in Muskegon County by 2055!

Love your community. Leave 5%.

231.722.4538 | muskegonfoundation.org