

the future of comm**unity**

AN UPDATE FROM YOUR
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
for **MUSKEGON COUNTY**



Ambassadors Reception panelists
and Northern Initiatives' Melissa Evans



Inclusive Prosperity workshop



Rotary Community Mixer,
photo courtesy of
Read Early. Read Often.



Muskegon Latino Festival, photo by Pat ApPaul (patappaul.com)



Cooking class at Kitchen
242, photo courtesy of
Kitchen 242



Muskegon Civic Theatre's *Fun Home*,
photo by Therine Stout Arts



What Lifts You mural

built
on a strong
foundation

Cover photo:
Camp Pentalouan,
photo by Allie Riley

This year began with great promise and a keen interest to share how your Community Foundation served our neighbors and residents in 2019. A year culminating in a new strategic plan, built on the foundation of all that is great about our county.

However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on Muskegon County, compounded by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, highlight how fragile our greater community is.

It also affirms the importance of the Community Foundation’s work and our vision to “build a vibrant community with great opportunities for all.” The three strategic goals we developed in the fall of 2019 have never been more vital to the future of our community:

1. Advance educational attainment
2. Foster a dynamic, local economy
3. Enhance community trust and promote prosperity for all.

These goals are our promise to you; we will do all that is possible to do better as we strive to achieve them over the coming years.

Thank you for all you’ve done to make Muskegon County a vibrant community with great opportunities for all.



Todd Jacobs
President/CEO



Asaline Scott
Chair, Board of Trustees

Highlights from 2019, including our Mason and Oceana County affiliates:

GIFTS RECEIVED:	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED:	TOTAL FOUNDATION ASSETS:
\$12,892,027	\$16,275,041	\$235,248,234

Here’s what you made happen in Muskegon County:

- \$2,839,057 education grants and scholarships
- \$3,783,265 community development grants
- \$3,389,954 arts, culture, humanities grants
- \$2,031,511 health and human services grants
- \$307,645 environment grants





advancing **education**

Teyondra Burch, winner of Muskegon Heights 5X5 Night and owner of Tey's Tutor Time (TeyTutorTime.com). Photo courtesy of Start Garden.

Literacy and education access has a dramatic impact on a person's ability to live a successful, prosperous life. While the Community Foundation has long supported adult learners with scholarships to continue their education, we recognized that the needs of these students are unique and thus created a new process specifically to support them, featuring a simpler application, rolling deadline, and monthly decisions. In 2019, the **Adult Scholarship program** supported 32 returning students with over \$64,000 in scholarship funds.

- The **Muskegon County Literacy Collaborative**, a partnership between Read Muskegon, the MAISD, area libraries, the Community Foundation and many other partners, was formed last year to address our county's literacy crisis. Together, these collaborators are focused on ensuring that all individuals in need of improved literacy skills, no matter their age, have access to the information and resources they need to succeed.



Erin Wood Walling taught at Oakridge High School for 39 years, often sharing fond stories about her students and work life with her parents on their Sunday night phone call. Art and Arlene Wood took special interest in Oakridge, valued education, and were quietly generous in their lifetime. In 2019, Erin established the **Walling Scholarship in Honor of Arthur and Arlene Wood** in loving memory of her parents. It is fitting that a portion of their hard-earned savings be allocated to help Oakridge kids achieve their dreams.



dynamic, local economy



As part of our commitment to create a dynamic, local economy, we continue to work with **Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW)** and **Muskegon Area First (MAF)**. Recognizing the barriers that rural businesses face in accessing support resources, the Community Foundation granted \$20,000 to MAF's Rural Small Business & Community Development Program. A \$12,500 grant to GROW allowed for an expansion of their services along the Lakeshore, including microloans, business development and mentorship opportunities for low-moderate income, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses.

We teamed up with the West Michigan Shoreline Food Processing Initiative to lay the groundwork for a food processing incubator and training development center: the FARM facility (Food, Agriculture, Research, and

Manufacturing). The FARM, located at the corner of Stebbins and Quarterline Roads, will provide area college students with the opportunity to witness innovation and growing businesses with room to expand at a state-of-the-art pilot food processing training center. The vision for the FARM is to become a regional hub of learning, capacity building and new product development for food processors of all sizes in Muskegon County.

- A previous program-related investment of \$1,000,000 to **Northern Initiatives** continues to provide loans to businesses that otherwise would not have access to bank loans. Local favorites like The Only Cannoli (owners Bethany Bauer and Brittany Meloche pictured left), Abeshi Ghanian Cuisine and Nipote's Italian Kitchen took part in this program.
- **Daniel and Sheryl Kuznar** are passionate about supporting a variety of needs in Muskegon County. From their Donor Advised Fund, the Kuznars have given grants to the FARM and other programs that boost the local economy, as well as groups like Community enCompass's Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). Furthering their impact, Dan and Sheryl are also committed to making higher education more accessible through their contributions to the Muskegon Area Promise and Kickstart to Career education savings program — and, of course, the **Kuznar Family Scholarship**.





prosperity for **all**

In keeping with our commitment to inclusion and equity, we awarded 10 Inclusive Community Grants to local groups seeking to create a deeper cultural awareness of diversity in Muskegon County. Over the year, nonprofits put these funds to work in remarkable ways. Arbor Circle's **Inclusive Foster Care and Adoption Project**, for example, provided training for child welfare staff and a public event to help educate potential guardians and parents through an inclusive lens. And **Project Fatherhood** (pictured), a book club founded by Read Muskegon, empowers participants to break the generational cycles of illiteracy, incarceration and poverty.

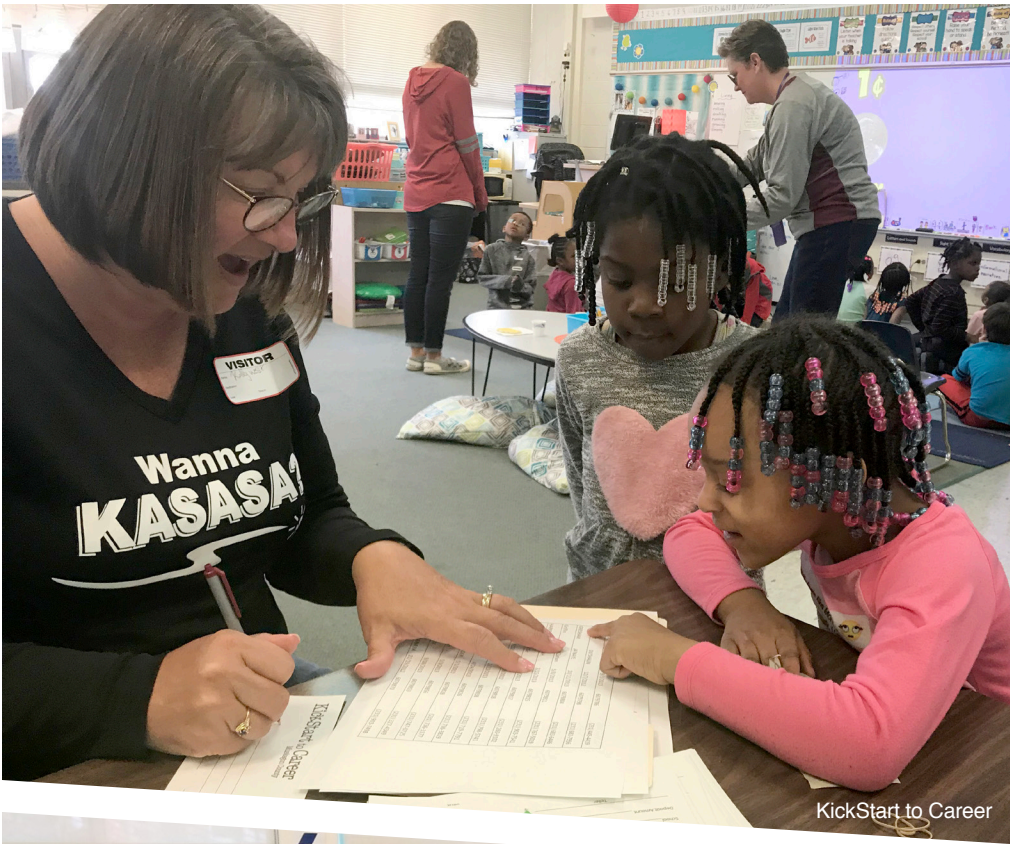
Other grantee and program highlights include:

- Support for developing a local **Inclusive Leadership Academy** to eliminate barriers and increase opportunities for inclusion in board rooms, committees and other networks.
- The Coalition for Community Development launched their **Who Gets to Tell the Story Matters** project, collaborating with the **MAISD** education system to redefine how Black history is taught in our schools.
- The **Community Gathering Initiative** from HealthWest facilitated gatherings and training from **Speak Down Barriers**.
- **NAACP's Civil Rights Education Forum** sought to preserve the verbal history of our NAACP chapter and capture stories of Life Members who participated in major civil rights actions.
- The **Disability Network** provided free Accessibility Assessments to 10 local businesses.
- **Community enCompass** hosted a series of film screenings and community conversations related to the complexity of issues surrounding equity and access in local housing.
- The **Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance (LEDA)** is working to expand their presence in our community – making Muskegon a more inclusive place for all who live and visit.
- The **Muskegon Rotary** purchased 50 copies of Dr. Joy DeGruy's *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* and collaborated with local libraries to stimulate discussion through a "Books in a Bag" program. Check out a bag for your next book club read!



Jane Otrhalek and Tonya Rund fell in love 25 years ago. As they celebrate 5 years as a married couple this year, they wanted to honor those who paved the way to make their relationship possible. Jane and Tonya created the **Love is Love Fund**, which helps LGBTQ+ individuals and families access resources while promoting equity and advancing racial, economic and gender justice in Muskegon County. This Donor Advised Fund is the first at the Community Foundation to support the LGBTQ+ population directly, and we are so proud to support Jane and Tonya's wishes.





KickStart to Career



KickStart to Career

Stay together, thrive together: over 80 Muskegon County families are stably housed following the Eviction Prevention Program's second year and expansion to include two courtrooms. Thanks to a partnership between the 60th District Court, Community enCompass, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and participating landlords, families are connected to resources and financial coaching that help keep them in their homes. In 2019, the project was supported with a total of \$76,720 in grant funding.

- **KickStart to Career** successfully launched, supporting 2,078 Muskegon County kindergarten students with a \$50 savings account. Students participated in financial literacy lessons and were encouraged to save for their future. Nearly 20% of participating students made a deposit in the first year! In December, just under **\$50,000 was raised on Giving Tuesday** via donations from donor advisors, private donations and a \$15,000 match from Prosperity Now's 1:1 Fund. Later in the year, our Mason County affiliate launched their own KickStart to Career initiative — doubling the size of the program!





a vibrant community



Brian Schuitema puts other people's names in lights: he's responsible for the messaging on the Frauenthal Theater marquee. Last year, he named the Frauenthal Center as a future beneficiary on his life insurance policy. We're grateful to have Brian as part of the Frauenthal team and now as an Ambassador of the Community Foundation through the generous future gift he's planned to support the theater he loves.

Brian Schuitema, marquee
Photo courtesy of the Frauenthal Center

In November, community members gathered to hear Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green and Mike Green speak at our Annual Gathering, *Building an Inclusive and Equitable Community for Local Prosperity*.

The event was followed by a half-day community workshop, led by Dr. Bracey-Green, (pictured left) that took a deeper dive into strategies to build inclusive, equitable and prosperous communities.

We also sponsored a series of diverse events last year, including the Muskegon Latino Festival and the 5th Annual Muskegon Rotary-Muskegon Heights Community Mixer.



Our Youth Advisory Council granted out \$45,000 to programs focused on mental health — a result of their Youth Needs Assessment administered in 2018. These grants supported Reeths-Puffer's Breakfast Club, Community enCompass's YEP, Planned Parenthood Safer Choices Initiative and many others. They also awarded over \$10,500 in teacher mini-grants to Muskegon County teachers and participated in holiday shopping through organizations like Mission for Area People, COGIC Community Center and United Way of the Lakeshore.





the new
normal

MPS students Adelyn and Vivian,
photo courtesy of the Witmer Family.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a new normal for the people of Muskegon County. On all fronts — economy, education, access to nonprofit services — the vulnerable populations of our community shouldered the greatest burden.

Here's what we've done so far in 2020 to combat these disparities:

- Partnered with the United Way of the Lakeshore to create a **COVID-19 Response Fund**, which raised over \$300,000 for nonprofits providing essential services.
- Raised over **\$575,000 on Match Day** to support 42 local nonprofits that typically rely on private fundraising to fulfill their missions, allowing them to continue operations during the pandemic.
- Advocated for and supported the **Vote Yes for MPS** campaign for Muskegon Public Schools' bond proposal in the spring election — an effort that passed with flying colors.
- Partnered with **Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women** (GROW) to create the **Muskegon County Recovery Loan program**, which supports businesses disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and Stay-at-Home orders, including businesses located in rural areas and underserved, low-moderate income, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses
- Spread the word about **Muskegon Area District Library's Wi-Fi hotspots** to connect students to the resources they need and collaborated with **Muskegon Public Schools** and faith partners to open their Wi-Fi access to the public and promote free hotspots around the community.
- Became partners with **Education Trust-Midwest's Equity Advocates Coalition**, advocating to our state lawmakers for equitable digital access and serving as a voice for Muskegon County.



Thank you to the following people who notified us of promised future gifts or created new funds in 2019. These gifts will do great things in our Muskegon County community...forever.

Promise Gifts

Anonymous (3)	John & Kristy Mattson
Susan Bergmans	Glen Muehlhausen
Bob & Nancy Bierenga	William & Barbara Rafail
Cathy & Bernie Berntson	Brian Schuitema
Ian & Shannon Davis	Jean Noble Stone
Bob & Clara Harrell	Tom & Liz Trzaska
Maria & Ken Hoopes	Patricia Van Epps
Larry & Lynne Larsen	Roger Wiitanen

New Funds

- **Anonymous** — A modest donor left a significant gift through their estate that will provide annual support to Lake Harbor United Methodist Church forever.
- **Bruce & Yvonne Essex Fund** — For several years, Bruce and Yvonne have given generously to their scholarship fund and other causes. This year, Bruce gave from his IRA to create this Field of Interest Fund — a tax-smart gift that will help build a vibrant Muskegon County.
- **Father Jack Foundation Fund** — Before the difficult decision to close the Father Jack Foundation, its Board wanted to ensure the legacy and work of Father Jack LaGoe continued. This Field of Interest fund will help support unmet needs in our community.

- **Kettler/Johnston Fund** — Following Don Kettler's sudden passing, his family channeled the outpouring of memorial gifts into a Donor Advised Fund (DAF). His wife, Heather (pictured right), combined this with a gift in memory of her mother, Elizabeth Reeves Johnston, and will use the fund to support causes important to their family.



- **Kids' Food Basket Fund** — Recognizing the impact of their work in addressing food insecurity among youth, Kids' Food Basket created this Organization Endowment Fund to build long-term support for their work in Muskegon County.
- **Kiskey Natural History Fund** — Years ago, the Lakeshore Museum Center received a gift from the late Florence Kiskey. To streamline their record-keeping for this permanent resource, they created this fund which will continue to support their natural history exhibits and programs.
- **Little Learners Fund** — Though the Little Learners preschool doors have closed, its leaders started this Designated Fund to continue to impact little lives. The fund will support art- and literature-based programs for young children at the Muskegon Museum of Art.
- **Love is Love Fund** — Jane Otrhalek and Tonya Rund used the Build a Fund option, adding gifts over three years to create this DAF. Through it, they will support organizations and projects that serve the LGBTQ+ community and their families.
- **Gordon R. & Janet M. Obenhaus Fund** — In 2012, Gordon and Janet set up a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) which provided them guaranteed income during their lives. With their passing, the remainder of the CGA created this fund to support the Muskegon Humane Society.



- **Bruce & Margaret Spoelman Fund** — Bruce has worked with the Community Foundation for years through his leadership roles with the Muskegon YMCA. In 2019, the time was right to expand the relationship, and Bruce and Margaret transferred appreciated assets to start a DAF.
- **Trzaska Family Fund** — Tom and Liz are connected to many organizations in the community. With retirement on the horizon, and after careful planning, they were excited to more fully invest in the Muskegon community by creating a DAF, as well as a planned gift in their estate.
- **Walling Scholarship in Honor of Art & Arlene Wood** — Retired educator Erin Walling used some of her inheritance to both honor her parents and continue her investment in the students of Oakridge High School.
- **Margaret A. Wright Scholarship Fund** — Margaret worked as a secretary for the Norge Corporation, the County of Muskegon and Muskegon Construction. Her estate gift will help our county's students pursue careers of their own.
- **Todd Wright Fund** — Created by Kimberly Suarez to remember her son Todd, this DAF will support programs and projects benefitting individuals facing substance abuse and addiction challenges.

We are your local partner for doing good and your gifts make it all possible. Visit muskegonfoundation.org for more information about how you can make a difference in this place we call home.

Our Values

1. Promoting Hope and Opportunity
2. Building Collaborative Community Goals
3. Fostering an Inclusive Community



community foundation

Muskegon County

Our Vision

To be a leader in community philanthropy and build a vibrant community with great opportunities for all.

Our Strategic Goals

Advance educational attainment (Education):

- Life-long literacy, including STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) and financial literacy
- Educational equity (opportunities for every student to achieve their full potential)

Foster a dynamic, local economy (Community and Economic Development):

- Workforce supports, including affordable daycare, housing and transportation
- Business supports, such as entrepreneurship development and capacity of local community and economic development partners

Enhance community trust and promote prosperity for all
(Diversity, Equity and Inclusion):

- Through cultural competence, dignity and social justice, catalyze community to embrace inclusive prosperity and promote the development of spaces where all voices are valued



for good. for ever.

Community Foundation for Muskegon County
425 W. Western Ave., Ste. 200 | Muskegon, MI 49440
231.722.4538 | www.muskegonfoundation.org

Your gift to the Community Foundation will make an impact, today and in the future.

Gifts you give are invested for long-term growth, providing grants back into the community. You become part of the effort to create positive change within our community...forever. That's the power of endowment.

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%.

Also serving the Community Foundation for Mason County.



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