

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Foundation Awards Grant to Increase Third Grade Reading Levels

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF), together with the GHACF Youth Advisory Council, is pleased to announce eleven third-round grant awards totaling \$687,500 to support the northern Ottawa County community, including a \$145,000 grant (payable over two years) to the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) for World-Class Classroom Libraries (WCL). WCL aims to equip every K-4 grade classroom library in Grand Haven and Spring Lake school districts with robust and relevant classroom titles so students will have immediate access to the most current and quality books.

In 2016, the State of Michigan passed a law designed to improve third grade literacy outcomes. This law requires all students, starting with grade three, to read at or above grade level, and has increased urgency within our local school districts to guarantee students meet these new requirements.

“Resources in our schools are severely restricted,” said Sandy Huber, board member of GHACF, Grants Committee Chair, and former principal at White Pines Middle School. The State of Michigan passed a new law that beginning in the 2019- 2020 school year, all students must be reading and writing at or above grade level expectations by third grade or potentially face mandatory retention. This grant is a proactive step by GHACF and the Grants Committee to help our students in the districts of Spring Lake and Grand Haven meet this educational mandate.”

Research has shown that at least 1,500 high-quality titles are needed in every elementary classroom, and that the quantity and availability of these types of books to students is directly proportional to their academic achievement.

“We are so excited about this grant. In partnership with Reading Now Network, both GHAPS and SLPS have been focusing on literacy for all students by third grade,” said Dr. Kyle Mayer, Assistant Superintendent at OAISD. “We want kids to learn to read, but we also want them to love to read, so that they continue to grow in literacy throughout their lives. We can support that growth best in classroom environments with abundant reading materials aligned to students’ interests. This grant is going to greatly accelerate our ability to provide these essential resources to our children. We are grateful!”

The libraries align with the readers’ workshop model of instruction that has been adopted by both school districts. Books will be organized by reading level and will reflect various topics of interest, cultural relevance and topic in sciences and social studies.

“World-Class Classroom Libraries levels the playing field for students,” said Holly Cole, GHACF Director of Grants and Program. “The current MSTEP data shows that roughly 300 early elementary students from GHAPS and SLPS could be potential candidates for mandatory retention under the new law. This program will help give those kids the boost they need.”

Other grants awarded:

- **Children’s Advocacy Center** – \$50,000 for their Capital Campaign for Building Expansion. *\$8,000 is funded by the GHACF Youth Advisory Council.*
- **Grand Haven Department of Public Safety** – \$60,000 for four AutoPulse Units, one each for North Ottawa Community Hospital, the City of Grand Haven, Spring Lake Township, and Crockery Township.
- **Greater Ottawa County United Way** – \$15,000 for the 2018 Community Assessment Survey.
- **Greater Ottawa County United Way** – Up to \$375,000 over five years for Housing Next
- **Harbor Humane Society** – \$10,500 for the Training & Community Center.

The GHACF Youth Advisory Council (YAC) awarded \$31,500 for the following grants:

- **Grand Haven Schools Foundation** – \$7,000 for their Social/Emotional Needs Curriculum
- **Spring Lake Public Schools** – \$5,000 for the Expansion of Middle School Robotics
- **Pathways of Arbor Circle on behalf of the Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey Committee** – \$2,000 for the 2017 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey
- **The Ronald McDonald House of Western Michigan** – \$2,500 for the 2017 Family Support Program
- **West Michigan Environmental Action Council** – \$15,500 for Zero Waste in Landfill

In addition, three organizations were recently awarded a \$500 Facebook Mini-Grant through public voting:

- **Girls on the Run / Center for Women in Transition** to provide girls with a 5K finisher's medal after completing the June Celebration 5K Event at Coopersville Public School
- **Harbor Humane Society** to help fund the new community and training center
- **Grand Haven High School's DoRAK (Do a Random Act of Kindness) Club** to influence students' and staff's day with the little things and help change the culture at Grand Haven High School

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. GHACF is regularly recognized as a top 100 Community Foundation in the nation and is the 7th largest community foundation in the State of Michigan. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, corporations, and organizations, and serves as a steward of their charitable funds and legacies. In addition to awarding grants, the Foundation offers technical support to nonprofits, convenes community leaders on issues of importance, and advocates for the nonprofit sector. For more information visit ghacf.org.

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