

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Foundation Awards Grant to Grow Small Businesses

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF), together with the GHACF Youth Advisory Council (YAC), is pleased to announce eight first-round grant awards totaling \$168,452 to support the northern Ottawa County community, including a \$10,000 grant to Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW) for their Lakeshore expansion. GROW is focused on supporting women and men at various stages of business ownership. With this grant, they plan to increase services and support for minority-owned lakeshore small businesses through the offering of additional classes, one-on-one business counseling opportunities, and micro-lending.

“There is a capitalization and technical assistance capacity gap all along the Lakeshore,” said Bonnie Nawara, CEO of GROW. “This market also has a large population of Latino-owned businesses. With the funds from this grant, we will be able to provide clients with more access to capital and technical assistance, which will increase the number of startups in the area and drive revenue up for those who are in business but need growth assistance.”

GROW is a Small Business Association (SBA) authorized Women’s Business Center as well as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Their Small Business Lending program is an initiative designed to improve access to credit for men and women who are traditionally under-served and demonstrate the ability to operate successfully. All of their lending and trainings are non-gender specific.

Currently, GROW provides part-time office hours in Muskegon at the GVSU Innovation Hub and has built relationships with both Muskegon and Grand Haven small business owners. The expansion of services through the Women's Business Center will provide greater support to lakeshore business owners through classes, mentoring, business counseling, and micro-lending opportunities. The expansion will ideally increase the number of startups, as well as revenue for current business owners that are in need of growth assistance.

Other grants awarded:

- **Tri-Cities Broadcasting Foundation** – \$5,952 for its Summer Concert Music Series at Bolt and Pottawattamie Parks. The concert series is free to the public and provides an opportunity for residents and visitors alike to broaden their musical exposure and support a wide variety of artists.
- **The City of Grand Haven** – \$75,000 for the Re-Imagine Project (*\$10,000 provided by the GHACF YAC*). The reconstruction of the Imagination Station will bring a fully accessible play-space to our area. The new play-space will have multiple features which encourage inclusive play, new and improved building material, and access for all — including those utilizing wheelchairs.
- **Grand Haven Area Public Schools** – \$15,000 for Mindfulness Project, which will train 5th and 7th graders in mindfulness techniques to support reducing stress.
- **Northwest Ottawa County Chamber Foundation** – \$50,000 for creative development and production of a video-based media campaign highlighting the benefits of living and working in Northwest Ottawa County.

The GHACF YAC awarded \$12,500 for the following grants:

- **Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation** – \$7,500 for Applied Behavioral Analysis training for pediatric therapy staff, as part of the Pediatric Rehabilitation Program.
- **The Salvation Army** – \$5,000 for A Campaign for Area Children & Families.

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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