

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Foundation Awards \$6,440 in Competitive Grants

The Board of the Allendale Community Foundation is pleased to announce that they've awarded \$6,440 in grants to support the Allendale community, including two grants to Allendale Public Schools that strive to increase inclusion for children with learning challenges.

Allendale Public Schools received \$1,500 for "Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Needs to Increase Social Communication," a program that provides communication devices for students with SXI (Severe Multiple Impairment), allowing them to interact with the rest of their peers in general education classes. These devices would broaden the general education student's worldviews and increase the self-esteem and independence of students with SXIs.

AAC hopes to provide students with a button that will allow them to ask for help as well as a speech generating device to express themselves (GoTalk9+). This would allow students in the SXI class to initiate conversation and feel included, while also exposing the rest of the school (students and staff) to the children with special needs. The general student population would also be able to volunteer to lend their voices for the speech generators – allowing the children with SXI to have their devices accurately portray their own ages and genders.

A second grant of \$1,240 went to APS's "Oakwood Inclusion," which provides learning tools at Oakwood Intermediate School for the development and enhancement of inclusive classrooms so that all students can learn to their highest potential. This would allow children with special needs

to be integrated into the general education classrooms while also allowing them to have the tools needed to be comfortable and able to learn.

Inclusive classrooms or combining special education students and general education students into one class, allow all students to interact with and become comfortable with differences while increasing the sense of belonging for special education students. By bringing in inclusive tools and books, it establishes the idea that not only do people learn at different speeds, but also in different way. Having the general education students exposed to these learning tools would help normalize their use by a variety of people.

Additional grants include:

- **Allendale Public Schools** – \$1,000 for “Falcon News Network,” a student-centered program that teaches students about media – its production and the journalism behind it. The program is currently an extracurricular activity, which means it does not receive funding from the school. This grant will allow for the purchase of new equipment for the in-school news updates.
- **Allendale Public Schools** – \$700 for “Phonological Awareness Training,” which will provide funding for nine Allendale kindergarten and young fives teachers to attend the Elevate! Taking Teaching to New Heights conference. This conference would provide area educators with the most up-to-date research and methods used to educate children in phonological awareness, and fill a gap found in the previously used ELA (English and Language Arts) model, thus allowing for earlier acquisition and better understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds by young children.
- **Allendale Public Schools** – \$1,500 for “Tournament of Books,” to purchase books with more diversity to expose children to diverse points of view while also engaging students in literature. The ability to see different perspectives and cultures is invaluable to the development of children and their understanding of the world and their place in it while increasing their empathy and understanding of others. Students will read, discuss, and

vote for their favorite books from a variety of genres, which will increase student reading scores while also enticing kids to become invested in reading and diversity.

- **Second Church of Allendale** – \$500 for “Hand2Hand,” a program that provides weekend meals to students in Allendale Public Schools who require supplemental nutritional support in tandem to what is available at home. Proper and consistent nutrition and meals are necessary not only for physical development but also to allow children to have the energy to learn and participate in school. This will provide meals to students when they would otherwise have no access to nutritious meals.

The next grant deadline for area nonprofits is September 27, 2019. The grant application can be found at <http://www.ghacf.org/Allendale/grants>.

The Allendale Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving the Allendale community since 1999. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, companies and organizations, and serves as a steward of charitable funds and legacies. For more information, or to give a tax-deductible gift to the Greatest Needs Fund at the Foundation, visit www.allendale-cf.org or follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/AllendaleCommunityFoundation. The Allendale Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.

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