

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**Contact:** Hadley Streng, President  
Grand Haven Area Community Foundation  
616-842-6378

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## **Community Foundation Grant Supports Teen Center**

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF) is pleased to announce thirteen third-round grant awards, totaling \$450,085, in support of Northwest Ottawa County and our surrounding communities. This includes a \$75,000 grant to Momentum Center for their Teen/Pre-Teen Program, which provides community and support to area youth and focuses on positive relationships, mental health, and wellbeing, with the goal of reducing mental health crises in the youth population.

"Our teenagers are experiencing unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety," said Barbara Lee VanHorssen, Experi-Mentor at the Momentum Center. "With this generous support from the community foundation, we will be able to expand the Momentum Center Teen Program so that we can provide a place of respite for our young people no matter who they are or where they are on their journey."

The program is for youth ages 11-17 (or 18 years if in high school) in the Northwest Ottawa County community. Momentum Center Teens is modeled after the adult program and practices a people-first environment. Specifically, the program strives to increase the number of participants and maintain or increase participation and engagement rates. The program also aims to decrease self-reported levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, substance use, and stigma while improving self-esteem, quality of relationships, and overall well-being of its members.

"Our young people will become more resilient as they learn the skills of building healthy relationships, effective communication, and how to identify and seek out resources when

needed,” said VanHorsssen. “The Tri-Cities is fortunate to have a community foundation that is so in tune with community needs and so generous in its support of strategies for meeting those needs.”

Other grants awarded:

**Ready for School** – \$35,000 for Reach Out and Read: West Michigan Regional Healthcare Collaborative, a North Ottawa Demonstration Pilot that provides developmentally appropriate books to health care providers to give to caregivers. The program encourages caregivers to share books regularly with their children, equips parents and guardians with the knowledge and tools they need to nurture early learning, and builds home libraries. This cost-efficient, evidence-based program gives early literacy tools to families of young children promoting early literacy, healthy child development, and strong parent-child relationships.

**Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM)** – \$20,000 to engage Grand Haven Area Public Schools (GHAPS) third-grade students through art education. The GRAM will partner with GHAPS to engage all third-grade students in the children’s focused exhibition, “David Wiesner & The Art of Wordless Storytelling,” throughout the 2019-2020 academic year.

**Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates** – \$20,000 to expand their Legal Outreach Program into Northwest Ottawa County to ensure immigrants and refugees have accurate information about their rights, resources, and community programs available to them.

**ODC Network** – \$101,000 for their Cultural History Center (CHC), which will provide hands-on learning to children and patrons while also creating an authentic, immersive experience of Indigenous Peoples’ history and culture in an engaging and inclusive way.

**GROW** – \$15,000 to build greater capacity and presence throughout the Lakeshore to support small business owners and entrepreneurs through staff support and strategic, purposeful marketing activity such as participation in local membership organizations and events.

**Walden Green Montessori School** – \$15,080 for the purchase of varied, relevant, current, and engaging books for classroom libraries, as well as bookshelves and book bins. Funding will also support Family Literacy Nights which will provide parents with tools to be partners in their children's success.

**West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum** – \$12,005 to create a sustainability network in Northwest Ottawa County that will include four main components: creating the Grand Haven Area Sustainability Leadership Committee and Sustainable Grand Haven Forums, implementing waste audits for 12 Grand Haven area organizations, and a collaborative outreach and public relations campaign highlighting successful sustainability initiatives at area businesses and organizations.

**Feeding America West Michigan** – \$20,000 to expand their freezer storage, which will allow FAWM to accept upwards of 400,000 additional pounds of donated, individually quick-frozen product comprised of healthy, local produce and protein.

**Grand Haven Area Public Schools** – \$12,000 to provide training and education regarding the development of social-emotional well-being skills for administration and staff at GHAPS in partnership with Opportunity Thrive, a nonprofit focused on developing thriving educators and schools. The training is designed to strengthen the resiliency of the adults that serve students across GHAPS and further contribute to improved mental health, self-care, and employee retention.

**Mercy Health Partners** – \$95,000 for the third, and final, phase of the Mercy Health Muskegon Medical Center capital campaign. A component of this campaign includes the Healing Garden, which will feature a 6,200 square foot central main garden, with an expansive green space that includes accessible walkways, as well as seating and shade provided by trees.

**Ottawa County Department of Public Health** – \$17,000 for Ottawa Food Healthy Eating Campaign, which will allow Ottawa Food to partner with a local marketing firm to create and implement a public awareness campaign regarding the importance of fruit and vegetable

consumption, including nutrition and cooking resources. Currently, more than 80% of adults in Ottawa County, over 60% of youth consume fewer than five servings of fruits and veggies per day.

**Harbor Humane Society** – \$13,000 for “People and Pets – A Resource for All, Keeping Families Together” to provide individuals with limited finances increased access to services that contribute to healthier pets and families, such as spaying/neutering, on-site vaccinations, etc.

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving the Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. GHACF is regularly recognized as a top 100 Community Foundation in the nation and is the 8th 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](http://ghacf.org).

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