

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Foundation Awards \$545,000 in Scholarships to Area Students

“The impact of these scholarships is undoubtedly profound, as they are supporting the future of many bright young minds,” said Chloe Weigel, a 2019 Grand Haven High School graduate and recipient of the PEO Scholarship from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF). “It is a perfect example of the philanthropic nature of this community. Giving this gift to students is creating a foundation for a brighter future, which will in turn facilitate a generation that continues to give their time, talent, and treasure. These awards are establishing a basis for future philanthropists and successful individuals that will contribute valuable skills and assets to society.”

This past spring, the GHACF awarded \$545,000 in scholarships to 235 area students. The GHACF holds over 125 scholarship funds with varying criteria, such as financial need, academic achievements, and field of study. Another factor our scholarship committee considers is if a student would be among the first in their family in their generation to continue their education after high school. Over \$120,000 of the total awards went to first-generation college students, students attending Muskegon Community College, or students pursuing post-secondary education in critical career fields in our region—such as skilled trades and manufacturing.

“Our role as a community foundation is to support our students and continue to explore ways to lift them up,” said Lauren Grevel, Education and Youth Initiatives Officer at the GHACF. “There is a growing, nationwide conversation among scholarship providers on how to best support and engage first-generation college students, and our scholarship committee and team are no different.”

First-generation students enroll in and complete post-secondary credentials at a much lower rate than their peers. Nationally, a third of first-gen students dropped out of college, compared to 14% of their fellow classmates. These students face struggles at a much higher rate than their non-first-generation peers—college readiness, college access and retention, financial stability, etc.—and many times they continue to face challenges to their success once they enroll in college.

Jim Schmidt opened the Spartanwill Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships to local high school graduates who plan to attend Michigan State University. “I created the scholarship fund because, from my personal experience, continuing education creates additional opportunities to

broaden one's ultimate outlook and career,” said Schmidt. “I’m very pleased to pay it forward by investing in my hometown's growth through education.”

“The scholarships we received helped us work towards our goals,” said Weigel. “It is our job to pay it forward and be a beneficial source in the lives of others as we move forward. The future is truly bright, and we must ensure that a positive change is facilitated.”

The next scholarship application will open December 2, 2019. Visit <https://www.ghacf.org/scholarships/> for more information.

Photos of the July 10, 2019 Scholarship Donor Event are available on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/grandhavenareacommunityfoundation/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10162056110835319

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.

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Attached:

GHACF 2019 ScholEvent-9263.jpeg – Scholarship recipient
GHACF 2019 ScholEvent-9264.jpg – Scholarship recipient Coltrane Bodbyl-Mast
GHACF 2019 ScholEvent-9333.jpg– Scholarship recipient Chloe Weigel
GHACF 2019 ScholEvent-9398.jpg – Scholarship recipient with donor Tom Laughlin
GHACF 2019 ScholEvent-9399.jpg – Scholarship donors
Scholarship Infographic_2019.pdf