

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Hadley Streng, President  
Grand Haven Area Community Foundation  
616-842-6378  
hstreng@ghacf.org

**Community Foundation Grant Helps Families Facing Housing Crisis**

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF) is pleased to announce four first-round Community Impact grant awards, totaling \$342,100, in support of Northwest Ottawa County and our surrounding communities. This includes \$188,475 over three years to Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) to open a satellite office in Northwest Ottawa County to better serve families facing housing crisis in our community.

GSM serves as the Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for Ottawa County and provides critical housing services to residents from Spring Lake, Grand Haven, and Ferrysburg. The Housing Needs Assessment, provided by Bowen National Research and updated in May of 2019, notes that more than half of households in Northwest Ottawa County (35.5% of renters and 19.5% of owners) are considered housing burdened, meaning more than 30% of their income is designated towards housing costs.

“As the HARA, Good Samaritan Ministries is dedicated to providing the entire county with critical services to prevent and provide a path out of homelessness,” said Drew Peirce, Executive Director at Good Samaritan Ministries. “However, we recognized a significant barrier for vulnerable neighbors in Northwest Ottawa County from receiving the services they need and deserve: location.”

Currently, residents of Northwest Ottawa County must travel to the GSM Holland Office for supportive services. From the Spring Lake Township office, it is approximately 45 miles, round-trip. This trip is not only a significant time expense but requires safe and reliable access to transportation as it is outside of the Grand Haven Harbor Transit service area

Funding will be used to catalyze an expansion of these services already provided to Northwest Ottawa County, allowing GSM to hire dedicated staff, establish a physical presence, and provide rental assistance for families facing homelessness.

Peirce added, “Availability of time and transportation should not be a barrier to anyone receiving help. And it’s a barrier we can remove, thanks to the incredible support of the GHACF, by establishing an office in Grand Haven. We are thrilled to build a local, accessible, and collaborative presence to work with our Grand Haven nonprofit partners in making sure all those in Northwest Ottawa County facing homelessness are helped.”

Following the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Ottawa County, Good Samaritan Ministries was designated by the State of Michigan to create and manage an expanded Eviction Diversion Program for the county. To date, GSM has served over 100 families from our area within this program. In a typical year, prior to the pandemic, GSM would service approximately 20 families in the entire county.

Additional Community Impact grants include:

**Kent County Girls on the Run (KGOTR)** — \$37,000 to expand GOTR programs into Northern Ottawa County. GOTR is a Physical Activity Based Positive Youth Development program with life skills and health outcomes supported by independent, longitudinal research. Grant funds would be utilized to re-establish the programs and develop the resources and tools necessary for strong and sustainable programming within these communities.

**Momentum Center** — \$66,625 to “Test the Efficacy of the Momentum Center Model” in partnership with Community Mental Health, North Ottawa Community Health System and Pine Rest. The findings of this study will allow this collaborative of community health leaders to have a deeper understanding of the impact of the Momentum Center and will provide an opportunity for further process improvement including referrals, follow-ups and strategic collaboration.

**Ottawa County Department of Planning and Performance Improvement** — \$50,000 for “Ottawa County Digital Inclusion Strategy: Phase I – Comprehensive Data Collection,” which is the first of four phases to better understand how to implement access to reliable internet countywide. Phase One will collect data on the accessibility of broadband within the county, as well as research the affordability of access to households and businesses. As access to internet continues to be a necessity in our county, creating an affordable, accessible, and reliable internet connection for individuals, households, and businesses is crucial to the development of Ottawa County.

The next grant deadline is June 30, 2021. Letters of Inquiry are due May 26, 2021.

## ABOUT THE GHACF

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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Attached: Deborah and Kids.png, Circles.png