



where  
community  
happens

Fremont Area  
Community Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Newaygo County is more  
than a point on a map.  
It's a place with vibrant  
culture, generous people,  
and a strong sense  
of belonging. It's a place  
where community happens in  
deep and meaningful ways.

We feel connected to  
this place, but we are united by  
more than geography. We are united  
by love for our community and a shared  
commitment to see it thrive.

At Fremont Area Community Foundation, we  
believe community exists where passions and  
needs intersect. We see our role as one of  
connector—bringing generous individuals  
and dedicated organizations  
together to make a  
difference.



this is a place where  
every voice can be heard

this is a place where  
change for good takes root

this is a place where  
community happens

# Community is not just a point on a map—it's an idea.



Community stems from the notion that a diverse group of people can come together to make a difference. Community requires curiosity and participation. Community lives in the hearts of those who know there is power in shared dreams.

It's not so different from our organization. Fremont Area Community Foundation is much more than a building or a landmark. It's an idea rooted in generations of living, breathing individuals who believed in the future of Newaygo County. It's the intersection of passionate people and community needs. It's the notion that collaboration and innovation drive progress.

Though this report reflects the activities of 2019, it would be impossible to ignore the current events weighing on our hearts and minds. The combination of crises has revealed deep fragilities in our society but has also made us realize how much we need each other. That's why our organization continues to work closely with local partners to implement strategies to help our neighbors. As we continue this work, we do so with a renewed sense of gratitude for the spirit and resilience of this community. This crisis is far from over, but together we are stronger than the challenges we face.

Last year—like the decades before it—shows the power of people coming together. At the Community Foundation, 2019 was a year of generosity and impact.

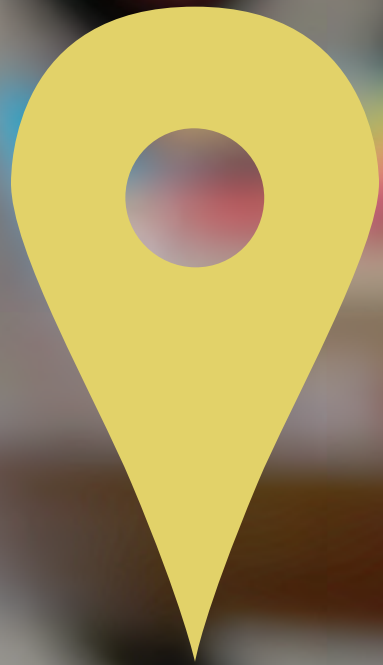
- We received gifts of \$2.7 million from generous donors and organizations
- We welcomed 18 new funds
- We awarded \$9.3 million in grants to local organizations
- We gave \$660,380 in scholarships to 412 students

Every one of these grants and scholarships was made possible by generations of people who chose to give back to Newaygo County through the Community Foundation. We are grateful that they—like you—recognized that this is a place where community happens and real change is possible. Thank you for being a part of this important work.

Joseph Roberson  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Carla A. Roberts  
President and CEO

# where healing happens



*Approximately 3.7 million  
children experience sexual  
abuse each year in the U.S.  
At least 1 in 7 children have  
experienced abuse or  
neglect in the last year.*

*-Center for Disease Control*



# open arms child advocacy center

Until Open Arms Child Advocacy Center opened last year, local children who experienced abuse often had to recount their trauma over and over to police, lawyers, investigators, and others. According to Amy Taylor, Open Arms executive director, the process can be overwhelming and scary for young victims who often worry they did something wrong.

“If we do it right,” she said, “children are only interviewed once.”

At child advocacy centers like Open Arms, children tell their story to a specially-trained interviewer in a child-friendly setting while agencies involved in the investigation watch on monitors

in another room. Open Arms then coordinates with partner agencies to provide follow-up services, including counseling referrals and support if a case goes to court.

Open Arms is the first center to serve Newaygo, Lake, Mecosta, and Osceola counties. Community foundations in all four counties and two youth advisory committees provided grants to support start-up costs.

“When we see the family getting help—that there was no further trauma to the child—we feel like we did a good job,” said Amy. “It’s rewarding to see kids going from victims to survivors and knowing that now they’re going to get help.”

# where generosity happens



*If everyone in  
our community gave  
5% (or more) of their estate  
over the next 10 years to the  
Community Foundation,  
it could result in  
\$33.2 million in  
charitable gifts.*

# john & ailene pugno



Despite chapters in their lives lived in other cities, John and Ailene Pugno always felt the pull of their hometowns. John's parents both experienced poverty while growing up and wanted something different for their own children. Moving to Fremont brought them opportunities in a small, close-knit community. "My dad coached here and started a business," said John. "My parents were part of the fabric of the community. I always felt like part of the town. My heart was always here."

Ailene grew up in Newaygo, close to the Muskegon River and close enough to school and the library that she could walk there. "I've moved away a couple times, but I've always come back," she said.

Now living between their two hometowns, John and Ailene are creating two funds through their estate plan to permanently support their community. One fund will be dedicated to environmental causes and is inspired by a love of the Muskegon River. The other will support Newaygo's library and Love INC.

"If someone has to fight to save these resources someday, they'll have a place to come for a grant," said John.

"There are so many people who need help," said Ailene. "We wanted to do something local and something that would last."

where

innovation

happens



*Last year, small  
businesses in  
Michigan created  
26,199 net jobs.*

—U.S. Small Business Administration

A woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a white short-sleeved dress and red high-heeled shoes, stands in the center of a city street. She is smiling at the camera. The street has yellow double lines and is lined with trees and parked cars. The background is slightly blurred.

# grow north

Creating a climate that encourages entrepreneurship often hinges on one key factor: if a potential entrepreneur can see someone who looks like themselves making money.

“In a rural area, it’s more difficult to connect with others and learn from others who are going through the same thing,” said Julie Burrell, business development coordinator with The Right Place. “There can be a lot of isolation.”

To foster greater connection, The Right Place partnered with the Community Foundation and Northern Initiatives—a nonprofit that provides loans to small businesses in rural areas—to create the Grow North series. Local entrepreneurs and small business owners gathered monthly to network and learn about different topics, from finding a niche to start-up funding. The series culminated with Pitch North, a business idea pitch competition with cash prizes. “We wanted to bring the kind of activity that’s becoming more common in Grand Rapids and Muskegon here to this community,” said Dennis West, retired president of Northern Initiatives.

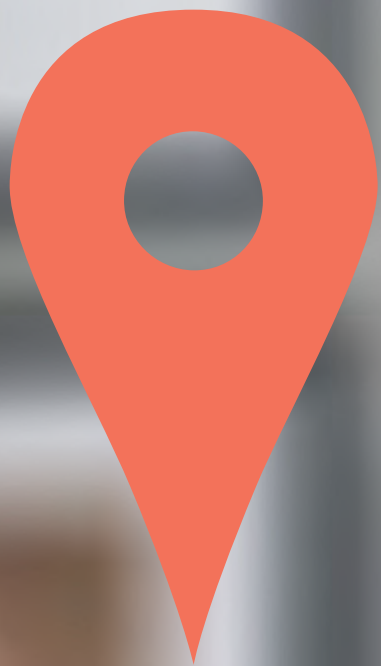
“It’s exciting to see how the participants are growing and learning from each other,” said Julie. “They’re supporting each other’s businesses, mentoring each other. They have a friendly group to bounce ideas off.”

“As people see other people making progress, it grows,” said Dennis. “You see movement and it becomes infectious.”

where

connection

happens



*30% of college freshmen drop out before their sophomore year due to factors like cost, academic struggles, and personal issues.*

—College Atlas, 2018

# bill & judy johnson



When Bill and Judy Johnson designed their scholarship, they got creative. Instead of helping a student with just the first semester or year of college, they worked with the Community Foundation to set up a scholarship that follows one student all the way through.

“We thought it would be better if the student could have that help for all four years,” said Bill. “We’re so glad the Community Foundation was willing to do this with us.”

“It was such a joy to us,” added Judy. “And a joy for David as well.”

David Grodus—the scholarship’s first recipient—is a Newaygo graduate now attending Ferris State University. He has stayed in touch with the Johnsons, sending them photos from move-in day and a note when he made the Dean’s List. Bill and Judy have no doubt he’ll be successful in whatever career he chooses.

“We hope he’ll see the value of investing in other students someday too,” said Judy. “I really think he will.”

“We think higher education is transformative,” Bill said. “Judy and I are both from what I would call humble beginnings. Our lives were transformed by a higher education opportunity. It’s important to us to try to help others have the same opportunities we’ve had.”

## OUR NEXT 75



### joe and holly moon

A desire to give back is deeply ingrained in Joe and Holly Moon. Both grew up in family businesses and were taught they had a responsibility to their customers and their community. They also share a love of serving the public and helping others, which played out in Joe's business and Holly's time as a Community Foundation trustee and elected official.

Together with Holly's sister Linda, the Moons used the Community Foundation's build-a-fund program to create the Betty Taylor Memorial Fund in honor of Holly's mother.

"Serving on the board many years ago, I realized that philanthropy was also possible for those with modest incomes," said Holly. After seeing the first grant made from the fund, she and Joe also learned more about Our Next 75 and were eager to get involved.

"We know our gifts to the Community Foundation and commitment to joining Our Next 75 will help to make a lasting impact for the community we love," said Holly. "We want to see it grow and prosper for generations to come."

In 2026, Fremont Area Community Foundation will celebrate 75 years of generosity and impact in Newaygo County. As part of this milestone anniversary, we are looking for 75 people who want to support the community they love both today and into the future.

These emerging philanthropists will play a vital role in building the future of Newaygo County. *To join Our Next 75, we only ask three simple things:*

1

#### Give today

Establish a named fund or make an annual gift of \$250 or more to an endowed fund at the Community Foundation

2

#### Give tomorrow

Include the Community Foundation in your estate plan

3

#### Share your story

Share with us why you chose to give back to the community



## roadmap for change

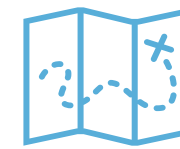
There are no shortcuts to improving the quality of life in our community. We know this. Interrupting generational issues, challenging broken systems, and implementing lasting change doesn't happen overnight.

That's why our roadmap for Newaygo County involves strategic grantmaking and community leadership in **three main areas**. Each area has its own decade goal to keep us moving in the right direction and to track our progress.

## OUR MISSION

To improve the quality of life in Newaygo County

*Evidenced by a vibrant economy, effective public sector, and well-being across socioeconomic levels*



### COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to addressing unemployment and underemployment in our community—all to fuel a growing and sustainable local economy.



### EDUCATION

We believe that education is one of the most important tools for success. That's why we are seeking to increase post-secondary educational attainment to 60 percent by 2025.



### POVERTY TO PROSPERITY

We strive to revitalize our community and shift poverty to prosperity by supporting individuals and families on their journey to empowerment.

# youth advisory committee

Our Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is made up of 24 students from each high school in the county, as well as the homeschool community. They spend the school year meeting monthly to learn more about leadership, philanthropy, the nonprofit sector, service, and more. They also oversee an annual grant budget that specifically supports organizations and programs impacting local young people.

In 2019, YAC awarded grants to support library programs and Spanish-language materials, art classes, mentoring programs, work-readiness education, and more. YAC members also spent time in 2019 conducting a youth needs assessment survey among their peers and were recognized with a YAC of the Year award at the Council of Michigan Foundation's annual youth summer conference.



**\$76,678**  
total grants awarded in 2019

First row, l-r:  
Advisor Patti Wheeler, Alex Sayer, Christian Burns, Emma Kartes,  
Alexis Strait, Iris Herrera, Willow Hager, Kiara Edwards, Evan  
Roossinck, Zakary Grabill, Samantha Wolff, Makayla Zerlaut,  
advisor Liz Mansfield

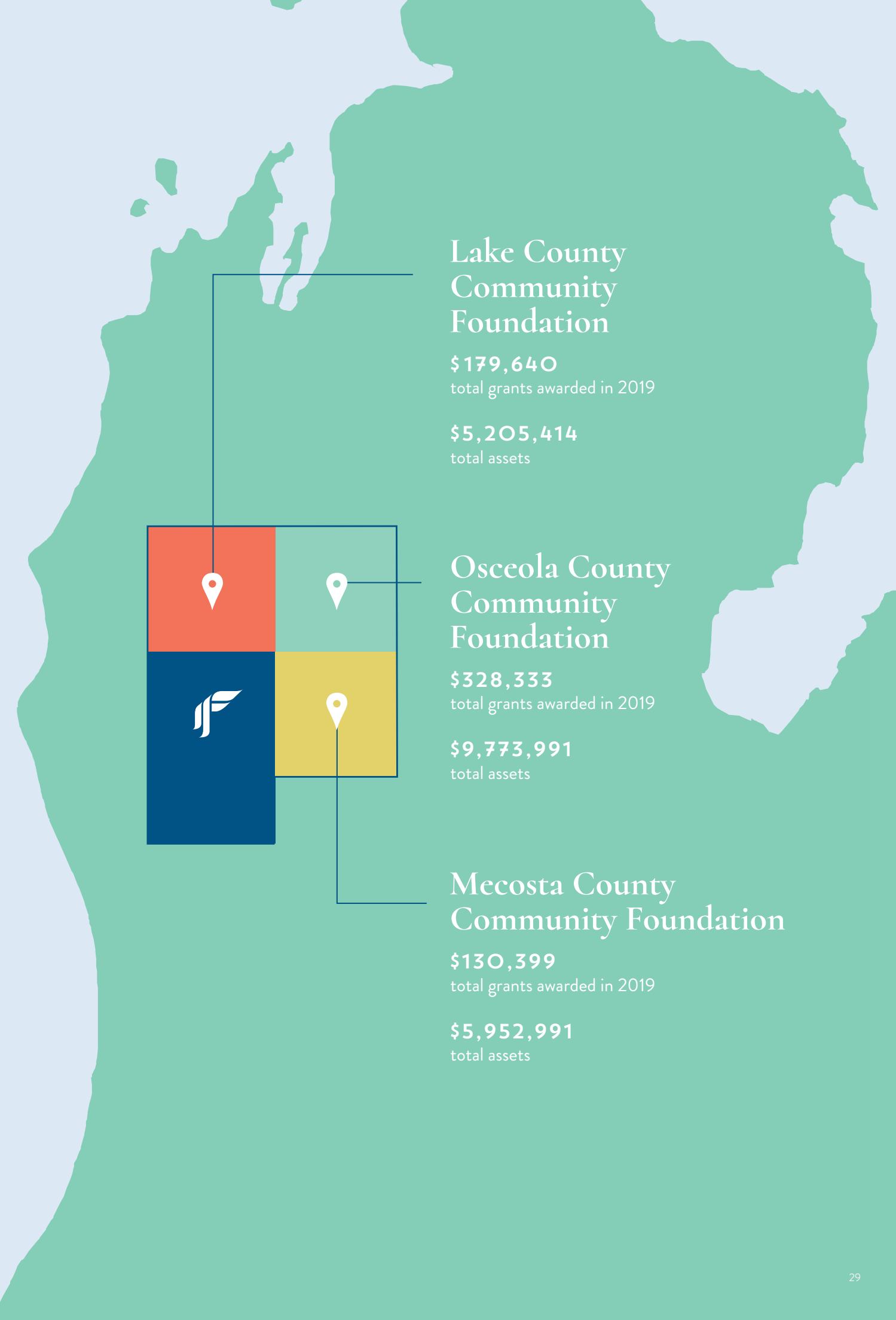
Back row, l-r:  
Elli McAree, Brennan Schuler, Jonathan Mellema,  
Christopher Clouse, Zeb Oatis, Chance Stebelton,  
Romeo Johnson, Jemi Perrin, Sidney Lay, Haleigh Schmitt,  
Wyatt Phillips, Logan Balkema, Braden Nielsen



## our affiliates

For well over two decades, Fremont Area Community Foundation has supported three affiliate foundations in Lake, Mecosta, and Osceola counties. We serve as a fiscal sponsor and provide operational support while a dedicated local board at each affiliate foundation recommends grant funding, awards scholarships, and participates in community leadership activities.

Last year, these three foundations provided funding to address a wide variety of community needs in our region, including food pantry support, college tours, art and education programming, camp scholarships, and more.



# supporting organizations

The Community Foundation is home to two supporting organizations committed to serving specific groups in our county. These organizations qualify as public charities through their relationship with the Community Foundation, have their own boards, and recommend or award grants based on their missions.

## The Amazing X Charitable Trust

Since 1978, the Amazing X Charitable Trust has provided support to organizations and programs serving people of varying abilities in Newaygo County. In 2019, grants were awarded to respite programs, rehabilitation services, education programs, and accessibility initiatives.

**\$222,450**  
total grants awarded in 2019

**\$5,973,543**  
total assets

## Elderly Needs Fund

The Elderly Needs Fund is dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of seniors in Newaygo County. Grants are awarded each year to programs that promote physical, mental, and emotional health of seniors, particularly efforts that include intergenerational programming. In 2019, these grants included food and transportation, art programs, and other important services.

**\$316,802**  
total grants awarded in 2019

**\$11,503,654**  
total assets

# professional advisors board

Our partnerships with professional advisors have helped community members fulfill their charitable goals for decades. Our collaborations with these important partners are guided by our Professional Advisors Board, a steering committee comprised of advisors from across our four-county region. Board members provide guidance to our philanthropic services team and serve as liaisons to our entire network of local advisors.

## Board members represent the following advisory areas:

- Estate planning attorneys
- Accountants
- Trust officers
- Investment advisors
- Financial planners
- Life insurance agents

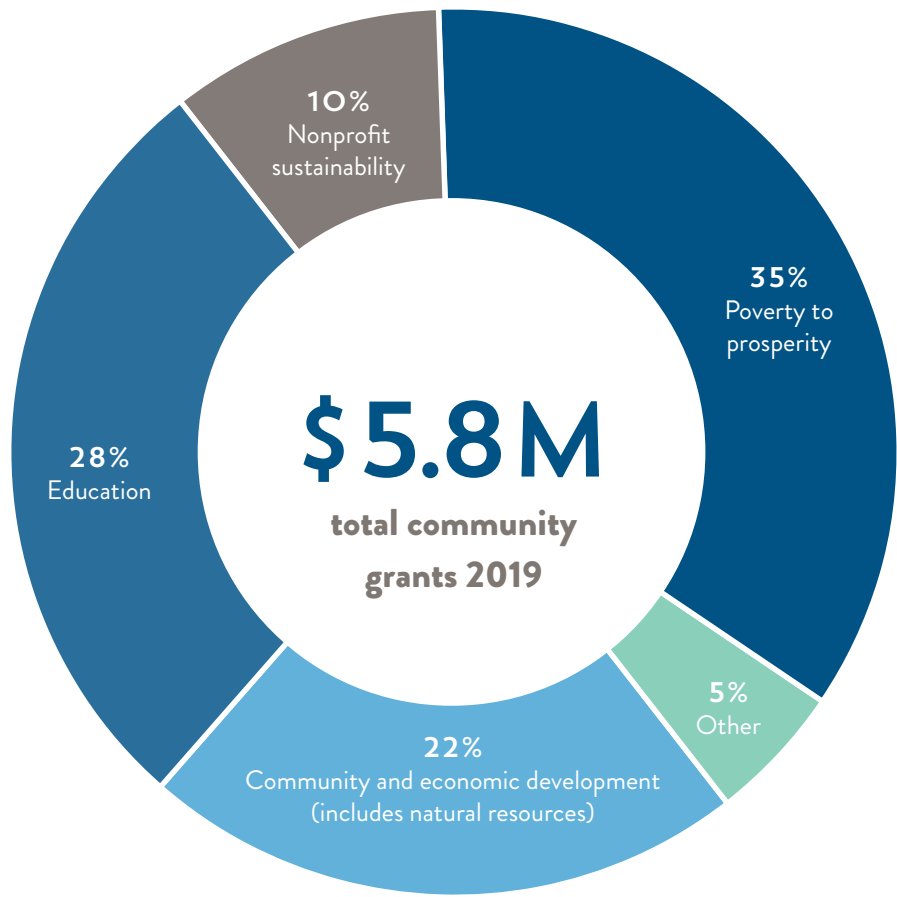
## Professional Advisors Board members

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Erin Barnhart   | Mark Miller      |
| David M. Byrne  | John Mousel      |
| Jason DeKuiper  | Jennifer Proctor |
| Juli Dykman     | Rolly Reed       |
| Don Farmer      | Scott Swinehart  |
| Cathy Kissinger | Seth Wenger      |
| David Landheer  | Brian Youngs     |
| Richard LeBaron |                  |

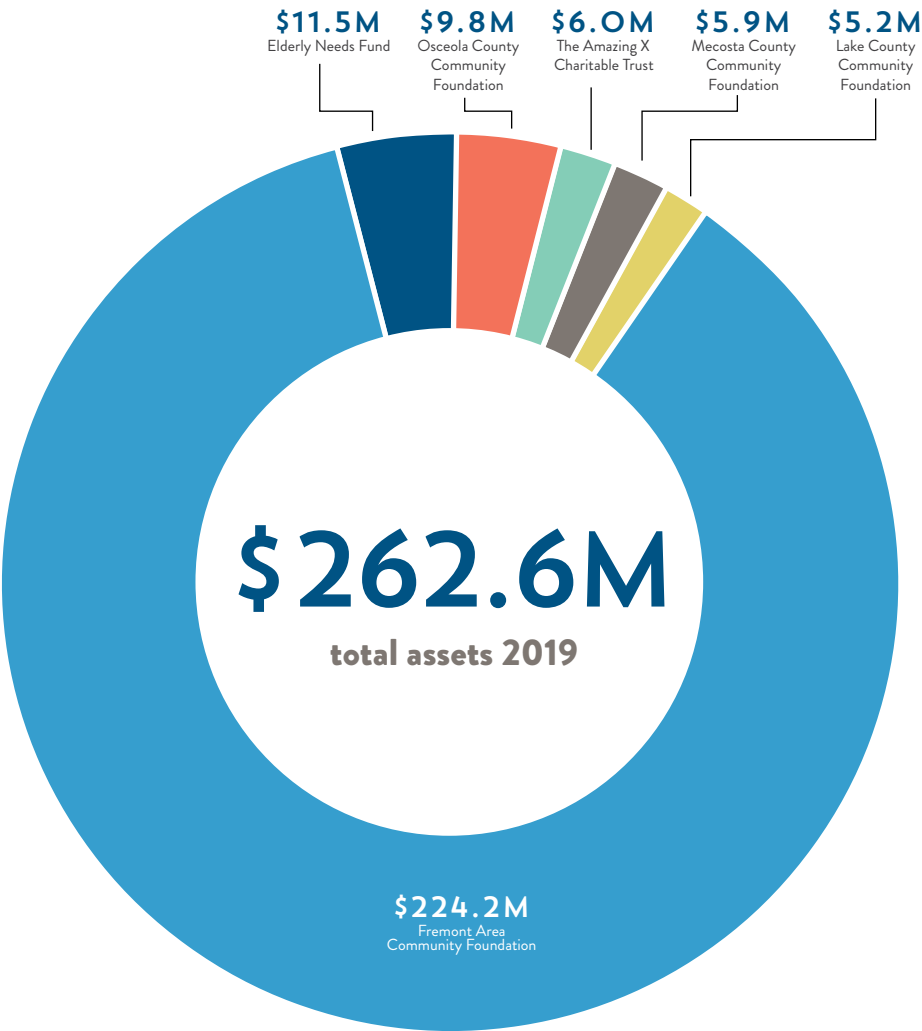
# financials

## grants by focus area\*

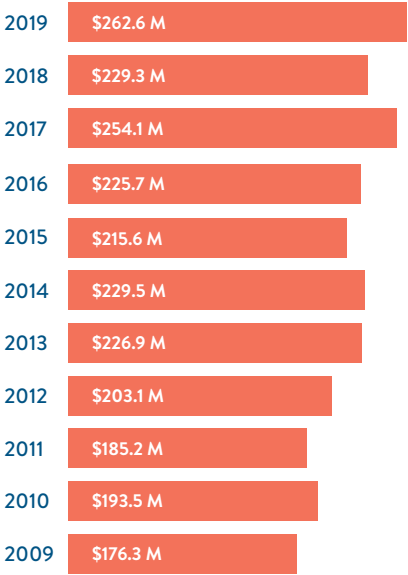
\*community grant awards



## assets

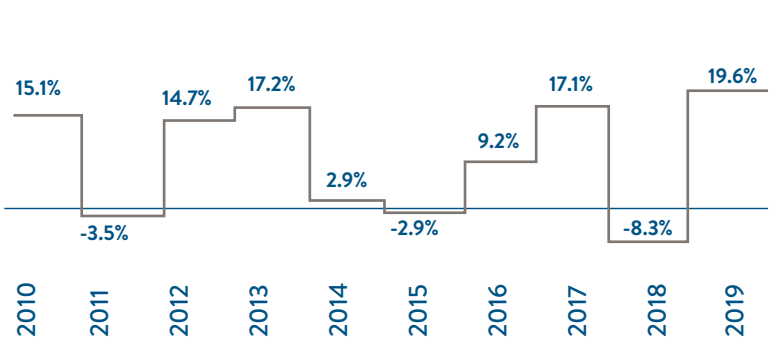


total assets by year

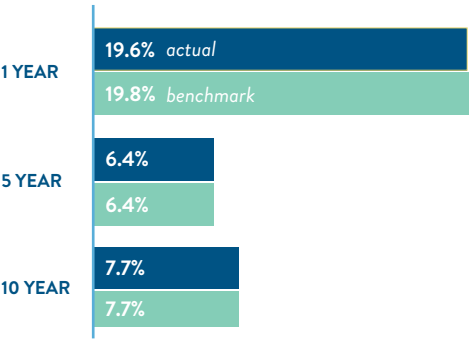


## investments

investment returns by year



investment returns versus benchmark



**\$9,274,314**  
total grants

**\$8,096,690**  
Fremont Area  
Community Foundation

**\$638,372**  
Affiliates

**\$316,802**  
Elderly Needs Fund

**\$222,450**  
The Amazing X  
Charitable Trust

**\$2,687,127**  
total gifts

**\$2,328,065**  
Fremont Area  
Community Foundation

**\$359,062**  
Affiliates

**\$660,380**  
total scholarships

**\$553,230**  
Fremont Area  
Community Foundation

**\$107,150**  
Affiliates

**412**  
Students awarded  
scholarships

# our board

Our board is made up of individuals from all corners of our community. Though they may not share the same background, profession, or zip code, they do bring a shared passion and dedication for Newaygo County. Each trustee's unique story and area of expertise makes our board richer, more connected, and enables the Community Foundation to make informed decisions to improve the quality of life for all.



JOSEPH ROBERSON  
*Chair*  
Head of accounting operations, Nestlé Business Services North America



DR. LORI TUBBERGEN CLARK  
*Vice Chair*  
Superintendent, Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (NC RESA)



MICHEAL ANDERSON  
Facility manager, North Lake Correctional Facility



CHARLES CHANDLER  
Retired from American Airlines



CAROLYN HUMMEL  
Retired educator



RANDY MCDONALD  
Retired from Fremont Ford



MARY RANGEL  
WIC program clerk technician, District Health Department 10



ROLAND REED  
CPA and partner, H&S Companies



PEGGY ROSSLER  
Retired educator



CATHY KISSINGER  
*Treasurer*  
Financial advisor, Edward Jones Investment



LOLA HARMON-RAMSEY  
*Secretary*  
Owner, Cart-Right Recycling, LLC



WILLIAM ALSOVER  
*Trustee at Large*  
Business consultant



MIKHAIL SALACINA  
Attorney and partner, Schuiteman & Salacina



DONNA TRICE  
Insurance agent, State Farm



THOMAS WILLIAMS  
Owner, Tom Williams Builders, LLC

# our staff



KATIE  
BOVEN



VONDA  
CARR



ROBIN  
COWLES



SARAH  
DIXON



ASHLEY  
FOLKEMA



JESSICA  
FOLKEMA



MARIA  
GONZALEZ



LINDSAY  
HAGER



RENEE  
HANSHUE



JACKIE  
HITE



CASEY  
JOHNSON



TARA  
KARTES



ELIZABETH  
MANSFIELD



WES  
MILLER



MARK  
PETZ



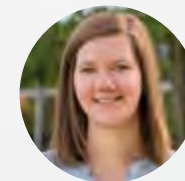
KATHY  
POPE



CARLA  
ROBERTS



LINDSEY  
SLATER



JENNA  
SMALLIGAN



TRISHA  
SOMERS



DAN  
WHEAT



PATTI  
WHEATER



# 2019 highlights

A small sample of accomplishments made possible by this community



**FIRST KICKSTART TO CAREER DEPOSITS**

Our first \$50 deposits were made into the Kickstart to Career Newaygo County accounts of more than 550 kindergartners! The children’s savings account program created in partnership with ChoiceOne Bank is expected to help more than 7,000 students save for continuing education and career training expenses over the next 10 years.

**DISCUSSIONS ABOUT WORKFORCE BARRIERS**

At a series of 2019 gatherings, we brought local business leaders together to discuss barriers—such as transportation—to workforce development in Newaygo County. At one event, the group learned about Wheels to Work, a program that provides reliable transportation for employees and is expected to launch in Newaygo County in 2020.



**2019 UNWIND**

Donors and friends gathered last summer for the Community Foundation’s third Unwind event. The evening took place at the new Becker Event Barn at Heritage Farms Market. In addition to enjoying good food and networking, guests heard about the history of the family farm—dating back to original owners Henry and Isabelle Becker—and how Newaygo County boasts a unique ecology favorable to agricultural diversity and tourism.

**BUILD-A-FUND PROGRAM**

Lifelong locals and Gerber retirees Tom and Char TenBrink are deeply invested in their community and its future success. Originally planning to create a scholarship through their estate, the TenBrinks turned to the Community Foundation’s build-a-fund program to start now. “Having grown up in the area, we’ve seen the good things the Community Foundation has done,” said Char. “It seemed like a good place to give back.”

**YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

More than 800 Newaygo County high school students completed the youth needs assessment conducted by our Youth Advisory Committee. The results of this survey will inform YAC’s priorities in the upcoming year.

**SUPPORTING FURRY FRIENDS**

A \$10,000 grant for operational support and programming and a \$5,000 matching grant was awarded to Bellwether Harbor, a local animal shelter that finds forever homes for cats and dogs. In addition to pet adoptions, Bellwether offers training and animal care programs, spay and neuter education, and socialization for hard-to-place animals.

“There are no  
shortcuts  
to any place  
worth going.

— Beverly Sills

THANK YOU!



