

FORWARD



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Pure Markette in Baldwin offers access to fresh produce, artisan goods, and connection. PAGE 4

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recently

HERB EARLY
Board Chair

As I reflect upon the year, I have to express gratitude to our generous donors who entrust Lake County Community Foundation with their charitable giving. They enable us to support our community partners who provide services and programming to enhance quality of life and assist our students in continuing their educations.

I would also like to thank our Board of Trustees and committee members for sharing their time, talents, and treasure. With their commitment, the Community Foundation reviewed more than 35 grant applications and awarded scholarships to six students.

In April, the Community Foundation had the privilege of hosting over 100 folks at our long-standing Baked Potato Supper and Raffle at St. Ann's Senior Center. This event provides the opportunity for us to connect with community members and share our mission and work. I look forward to visiting with you and enjoying a great meal in the coming year.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to recognize the support we receive through Fremont Area Community Foundation and our affiliate foundation manager, Sarah Dixon. She and the Newaygo County team provide a wealth of knowledge and guidance for the work we have accomplished.

recent grants

We awarded more than \$79,000 to organizations across Lake County in our spring grant round. Here are two highlights!

PoWer! Book Bags

\$5,000



PURPOSE:

To empower students of Baldwin Elementary School with the tools they need—like books and writing booklets—to practice literacy at home and during school breaks.

WHY IT MATTERS:

To help improve overall reading and academic skills, we are proud to partner with Baldwin Elementary School to provide students with the tools necessary to change the trajectory of literacy among some of Lake County's youngest residents.

Bass Lake Area Environmental Partnership

\$5,000

PURPOSE:

To protect Big Bass Lake by controlling invasive species.

WHY IT MATTERS:

The aquatic invasive plant species Eurasian Watermilfoil, poses a threat to Big Bass Lake's native wildlife. Grant funds will help provide a Diver Assisted Suction Harvest (DASH) boat to assist with the plant's removal. By mitigating the proliferation of milfoil, Big Bass Lake can continue to provide unforgettable recreation experiences, resulting in increased tourism revenue.





more than a market

village of baldwin

In 2023, the Village of Baldwin developed a vision planning process that asked a pressing question: What opportunities do you want to see in Baldwin? The process included extensive community feedback and focus groups, involving over 750 people.

“It was incredible to see the number of people who wanted to share their ideas,” said Meredith Gremel, volunteer market manager for the Pure Markette outdoor market. “When we began filtering through answers, two needs became clear. People wanted a social gathering space and access to fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables.”

Thanks to dedicated volunteers and local support, Pure Markette held its

grand opening on June 19. This local market offered residents and visitors the opportunity to explore and meet with farmers, food producers, and artisans, while also connecting with community organizations, service providers, and area businesses. There was even an area for outdoor games.

“We wanted to create a gathering place for people to explore, discover, and connect,” said Meredith.

The market also encouraged kids to get involved. They could complete activities such as “learn a fruit fun fact” with vendors and earn \$10 in tokens. Tokens could then be used to buy tasty, healthy items at the market.

“People of all ages thrive when they

are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy,” said Meredith. “The market is helping build a better and stronger community.”

Meredith also has her sights set on the future. “Our goal is to build a permanent structure where we can expand into a year-round space,” she said. “We could also provide hands-on classes, an incubator kitchen, and more.”

With growth in mind, Pure Markette tracked vendor and visitor metrics after each market. “It’s important that people understand the impact the market has,” said Meredith. “My hope is to drive health and wellness in an engaging way. We’re off to a really good start.”

rooted in community

lake-osceola state bank

Founded by E.L. Cole and C.W. McPhail, Lake-Osceola State Bank has been a pillar of Lake County since 1908. In 1911, Robert J. Smith joined the partnership. He started as the cashier-janitor, became a partner, and was the first in a long line of Smiths to successfully lead the bank. In 1987, Robert's granddaughter, Deborah Smith-Olson was appointed president and CEO.

During a recent visit with Deborah, she shared that her father, Robert S. Smith, introduced her to the concept and work of the Community Foundation, as he was one of the founding members. He and other community leaders

worked with the Council of Michigan Foundations to make the decision to join Fremont Area Community Foundation by establishing an affiliate foundation. He was also famous in the community for making home loans out of trust.

"He knew people and wanted to make a difference in their lives," said Deborah. "To this day, I run into people in the community that say, 'you know, your father trusted and loaned me the money to buy my home.'"

Deborah is honored to continue her family's philanthropic legacy through the partnership with the

community foundations that serve Lake, Mecosta, and Osceola counties. Lake-Osceola State Bank has established three donor advised funds in these counties to support community needs and programs.

A donor advised fund is a convenient, flexible tool for donors who want to personally recommend grant awards from a fund they have established. For Debbie, the goal for establishing these funds was simple. "It's the circle of life: Support the communities and the folks that support our business," she said. "We want to help make these communities great and we want our employees to live in great communities."



noteworthy



STRATEGIC PLANNING UNDERWAY

In October, the grants committee gathered to review our grantmaking guidelines and funding strategies. The consensus of the group was that we need to define our focus areas and consider large scale, high impact projects. We look forward to sharing our refreshed grantmaking strategy with our community partners once plans are finalized.

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

A group of regional community partners gathered in early October to engage in conversation about food insecurity. Feeding America West Michigan kickstarted the conversation by sharing their strategic priorities for 2024-2027, program details, and county-specific data. Then the group engaged in robust discussion to determine the strengths and opportunities for improvement of our partnerships.



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION OPENS JANUARY 1

The Community Foundation scholarship application will open on January 1. Multiple scholarships are available each year for high school seniors pursuing post-secondary education and career training. The online scholarship application is open January 1 to March 1. Find out more at facommunityfoundation.org/scholarships.



financials

TOTAL GIFTS

\$30,112

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS

\$16,502

TOTAL GRANTS

\$133,770

Community grants

\$76,870

Donor advised/agency endowment/designated grants

\$56,900

TOTAL ASSETS

\$6,574,973

All data as of September 30, 2024



An affiliate of Fremont Area Community Foundation

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FORWARD

The biannual newsletter of Lake County Community Foundation



A GREAT TIME TO GIVE

This year has been full of partnership, generosity, and impact. From grants and scholarships to events and conversations, everything we do is possible thanks to our donors, volunteers, and community supporters.

There's still time to get involved in 2024. Consider making a year-end gift to support the ongoing work of your Community Foundation. From gifts of stock to convenient online giving, we offer a variety of options so you can give in a way that works for you. Your generous contributions today help build a stronger community and make lasting change.

For more information or to discuss giving options, please contact Katie Boven at 231.924.5350.