

IMPACT



INSIDE:

DuWayne and Jean Schuler came to the area for a visit and decided to make it home. PAGE 7



FREMONT AREA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

FALL 2025

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It's hard to believe 2025 is nearing its close. We have packed a lot into this year and have even more planned for 2026—and none of it would be possible without your faithful support.

This fall alone, our community investment team and grant committees have been reviewing Bridging Generations Fund and community grant applications, our Youth Advisory Committee started a new school year, and our finance team has been working hard on budgets. Last month, we held our annual Fall Donors Luncheon and learned about One Township at a Time, a grant-supported program bringing together local older adults.

Another project we've been busy with this fall: planning for our 75th anniversary in 2026! See the next page for a little more on what to expect. We're excited about remembering, celebrating, and looking forward with you throughout the year.

We're also celebrating a well-deserved honor for Shelly Kasprzycki, our president and CEO. Shelly was chosen as a 2025 Notable Leader in Philanthropy by Crain's Grand Rapids Business. This honor comes as Shelly begins her fourth year leading the Community Foundation, and we couldn't be more excited to see her recognized. Read more on page 11.

Thank you for partnering with us in service to Newaygo County!



FREMONT AREA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

75
YEARS

SOMETHING EXCITING IS COMING

A new year is right around the corner, and with it comes our 75th anniversary! We're excited to honor our past, celebrate the present, and look toward the future with you throughout 2026. Expect to see us recognize Our Next 75 partners and share stories about the people who made us what we are today.

You should also be on the lookout for some fun new features on our social media, special additions to our usual publications and events, and some exciting surprises throughout the year. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

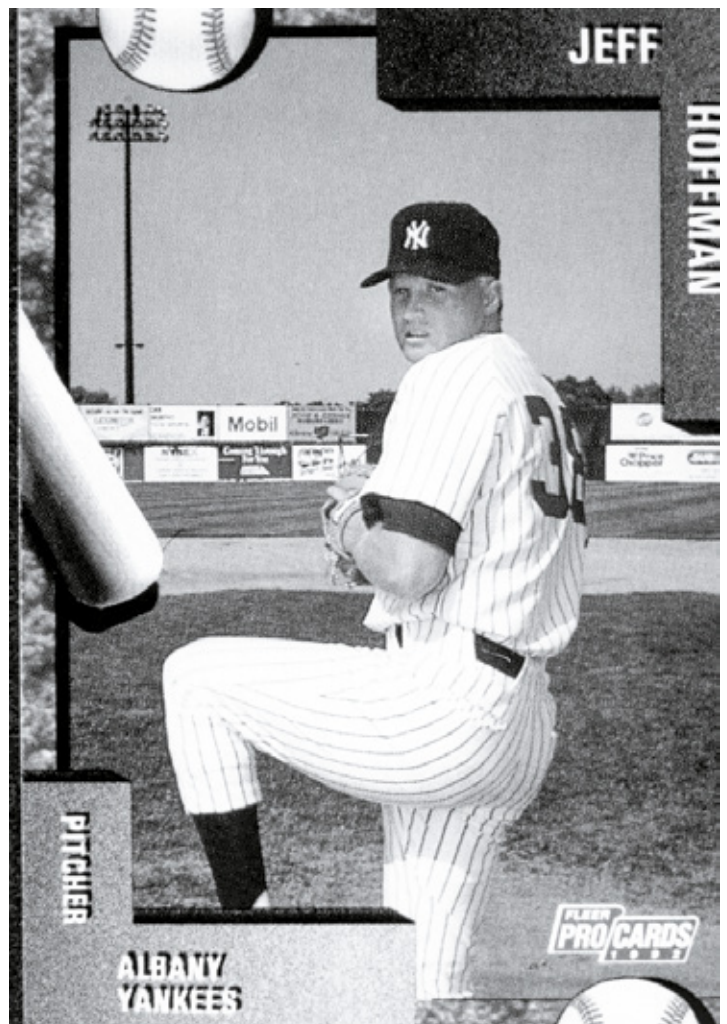
JEFF HOFFMAN

Born in 1967, Jeff Hoffman played baseball at all levels while growing up in Fremont. He went on to play for Ferris State University, then Vanderbilt University on a full-ride scholarship. In 1988, he achieved his childhood dream when he was drafted by the New York Yankees.

Jeff worked his way up the minor league system and was the AA Albany Yankee's ace. By all accounts, his future in baseball was bright. At the age of 24, however, Jeff's career was cut short when he died suddenly from an undetected heart condition.

His family channeled their grief into helping Fremont Public Schools athletic programs, and they established the Jeff Hoffman Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation. To date, the fund has contributed to high school baseball field improvements and scoreboard, supported varsity and junior varsity baseball players attending baseball camps, and supplied baseball equipment.

Jeff was an excellent baseball player but is remembered foremost for being an outstanding husband, father, son, brother, friend, and role model. The Hoffman family's desire to keep Jeff's memory alive, as well as their dedication to the community, is reflected in their continued commitment to support Fremont's baseball program and its players.



recent grants

Our Board of Trustees approved nearly \$2.3 million in our spring community grant round. Here are a few highlights!

City of Grant

Up to \$35,000

PURPOSE:

To support the stabilization of Grant's historic water tower. This award includes an outright grant of \$15,000, a \$10,000 matching grant, and \$10,000 from donor advised funds.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Grant's cypress and pine water tower was built in 1891 and is believed to be the last original wooden water tower in the state. The City of Grant will be working with an engineering firm to stabilize and restore this unique cultural landmark.



Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency

\$200,000



PURPOSE:

To support Parents as Teachers (PAT), an early childhood parent education program.

WHY IT MATTERS:

PAT is based on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Trained parent educators work with families to help them build their child's intellectual, language, social, and physical development. The program includes home visits, screenings, resources, and support, and it connects participants to a network of other families to learn from and grow with.

Village of Hesperia

Up to \$8,500



PURPOSE:

To support the HesperiaART Project, a community-driven public art initiative. This award includes a \$5,000 outright grant, a \$2,500 matching grant, and \$1,000 from donor advised funds.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Public art can add vibrancy to an area, bring attention to local talent, and strengthen community pride. The HesperiaART Project plans to install several new art pieces that reflect Hesperia's natural beauty and history. Art projects installed so far have included a mural and a student-created sculpture.

Sparta Area Migrant Resource Council

\$30,000

PURPOSE:

To honor local migrant and seasonal farmworkers and provide resources for their families. This award includes \$500 from donor advised funds.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Data shows that Newaygo County farms employ nearly 1,400 migrant and seasonal laborers. The majority of these workers report an annual income of less than \$10,000 for a family of four. Grant funds will support Farmworker Appreciation Day and Posada events where these families are celebrated and receive food, clothes, school supplies, and other resources.



TrueNorth Community Services

\$175,000



PURPOSE:

To support the Summer Blast program, a six-week, licensed summer program for Fremont, Grant, and Newaygo students. This award includes \$5,000 from a donor advised fund.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Offered for free to youth in kindergarten through eighth grade, Summer Blast programming includes lunch and snacks, recreation, field trips, learning opportunities, and enrichment activities. It provides a safe place for students to learn, have fun, and try new things.

care and quality close to home

Huntesy's Clubhouse

Tyler Huntesy's mother, Christine Huntesy, provided in-home daycare from the time Tyler was in preschool. She built her first Huntesy's Clubhouse childcare center in 2008.

Tyler went on to earn a business management degree from Central Michigan University and lived and worked in Detroit after college. When he came back to West Michigan, he got involved with the family business and is now its co-CEO.

"When I moved back from Detroit, we just had the Big Rapids and Morley childcare centers," he said. Today, there are Huntesy's Clubhouses in seven communities, including Newaygo and Hesperia. They employ nearly 200 staff and care for more than 750 children.

"We're providing a Grand Rapids-level of childcare here in our rural area," said Tyler.

Huntsy's Clubhouses are bright and inviting, with outside play areas and walls decorated with children's artwork. They care for children from six weeks to 12 years old and offer preschool and pre-K through Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program.

As Huntesy's Clubhouse expanded into Newaygo County, they moved into a building in Hesperia near downtown and next to Hesperia Community Schools. However, the interior needed some work. Using a program-related investment from the Community Foundation, Huntesy's Clubhouse was able to more quickly make the updates

needed to open their new center. Funds helped with new paint, flooring, storage, appliances, updated security, and more.

Recently, Hesperia's Huntesy's Clubhouse achieved the highest quality rating a licensed childcare provider can receive from the State of Michigan.

"It's a lot of responsibility when you make a commitment to a community," said Tyler. "We're incredibly proud of this accomplishment and want to thank the Community Foundation for its support, which played a key role in helping our program reach this outstanding level of quality."





we kept coming back

DuWayne and Jean Schuler

Sadly, Jean passed away in August shortly after we interviewed her and DuWayne for this story. She was a gracious, generous person, and she is deeply missed.

DuWayne and Jean Schuler have floated down the Amazon River, hunted roe deer at Balmoral, and visited former exchange students in Japan. But for all their travels, it's their home on Ryerson Lake that the Schulers describe as their piece of heaven on Earth.

After decades in Kent County—where Jean was a teacher and DuWayne owned a wine shop—the Schulers were introduced to Ryerson Lake by friends who invited them to visit. “We thought it was terrific and

kept coming back,” said DuWayne. They eventually began renting a cottage and then bought property of their own. They have now lived here full-time for more than 20 years.

This community, said DuWayne, “has a certain Currier and Ives feel to it.” The Schulers enjoy the rural setting with impressive amenities like Tamarac, the Dogwood Center, and a great library. They also like that local people are quick to give back.

“We’re thankful that so many people have put their resources back into the town,” said Jean. “You can see the difference it makes.”

DuWayne and Jean share the same commitment. DuWayne has served

on the library board and volunteered with the Friends of the Library, an organization Jean led for years. Jean has also enjoyed volunteering at Camp Newaygo and being part of the Fremont Garden Club and Quilter’s Guild. When friends introduced them to the Community Foundation, it felt like another natural fit. They decided to create the Jean Schuler Education Fund here in honor of Jean’s career as an educator.

“I wanted something that would reflect what Jean had been involved in,” said DuWayne. “She was an extraordinary teacher and had a profound influence on many young lives.”



OUR NEXT 75

Joan Richards

Joan Johnson Richards grew up in White Cloud, where her grandparents had once settled to work first in the lumber industry and then for the railroad. College and a career as an art teacher took Joan away from her hometown, but she has always felt a deep connection to White Cloud.

“I have a close feeling for White Cloud,” said Joan. “It was a fine place to grow up, and I would like to see the town thrive and people being proud of their town.”

To give back, Joan first created a scholarship at the Community Foundation for White Cloud graduates. She has gone on to create funds to support White Cloud, the environment and

animal welfare, and White Cloud’s library, as well as a donor advised fund.

Why is giving important to you?

Joan: “I have what I need, I can do what I like, and I won’t be able to spend it all. I want to give where it’s needed and to something that can make good use of it.”

Why give through the Community Foundation?

Joan: “My professional advisors suggested giving through the Community Foundation. My friend also started a scholarship at Grand Rapids Community Foundation. I talked to her about it and how it worked, and I decided to create one here for White Cloud.”

There is still time to get involved! To join Our Next 75, we 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.

To find out more about Our Next 75, contact a member of our philanthropic services team at 231.924.5350.



pro - advice

DAVID BYRNE
Attorney at law

THE IMPORTANCE OF WILLS AND TRUSTS

It is important for all adults to have a last will and testament drafted by an estate planning attorney. Depending on a person's needs and desires, a living trust may also be needed.

For an individual with at least one minor child, a will can appoint the guardian who will care for the child. A will or trust will also 1) name the person or entity to manage the individual's assets and money (called a personal representative or successor trustee) after the individual's incapacity or death; 2) state to whom the personal representative or trustee can make distributions (to beneficiaries such as children, grandchildren, friends, etc.); and 3) determine the age that the beneficiary/child of the deceased individual will receive control over his or her share of the assets.

If a person with a minor child does not have a valid will and/or trust, a probate court judge will appoint a guardian for the care of the minor child and a conservator to manage the

assets for the child. There will be uncertainty for the child and the potential guardians until the court makes this appointment. Additionally, the court may not pick the person that the deceased individual would have chosen. The court-appointed guardian and conservator will each need to file annual reports with the court and the conservator will need to obtain approval from the court to spend money for the child. The balance of the child's share will be distributed upon the child's 18th birthday, regardless of whether the child is financially responsible or not.

Having an attorney who is experienced, trained, and specializes in estate planning prepare a person's estate plan is the best way to ensure that person's wishes are fulfilled.

David Byrne is an attorney specializing in wills and trusts, small business, probate and trust administration, and Medicaid nursing home planning.

noteworthy

WELCOME NEW TRUSTEES

Our Board of Trustees voted to elect two new trustees in June. Marva Zeldenrust worked in banking for nearly 30 years and is an active supporter of the Newaygo County Fair and FFA. She also served on our Bridging Generations Fund. Nate Kooistra is a pastor at Reeman Christian Reformed Church and has been a board member at Fremont Christian Schools and Wellspring Adult Day Services. He is also the current chair of our Amazing X Charitable Fund. We're thrilled with the valuable experience and perspectives they bring to our board.



INVESTMENT BREAKFAST

In July, we invited fund advisors from across our service area to learn about how the Community Foundation manages its investments. Jeff Weisker, managing director of Fund Evaluation Group, joined us and shared an overview of our investment program and talked about current market environment and performance.

AUBREY BITSON JOINS OUR STAFF

We are excited to welcome Aubrey Bitson to our administrative team! Aubrey joined us as an administrative assistant and is excited to work with the community in a meaningful way. She is the first friendly face you see when you walk into the Community Foundation and provides administrative support by maintaining records, handling mail, and more. Welcome to the team, Aubrey!



recently

SHELLY KASPRZYCKI
President and CEO



On November 3, Shelly Kasprzycki, our president and CEO, was named one of Crain's Grand Rapids Notable Leaders in Philanthropy. Staff and trustees are excited to see Shelly recognized on a regional stage for her important work and leadership in Newaygo County. Excerpts from her interview and profile in Crain's are reprinted here with permission.

What draws you to a career in community service and nonprofits?

I started my career in healthcare administration and public health, but I had the opportunity to work with a lot of grass roots organizations. That led me to leadership roles, and I found it incredibly fulfilling to make a difference in people's lives.

Working in a community foundation environment is an honor that I am grateful for every day.

What do you see as the biggest emerging need in the communities you serve?

The biggest emerging needs are in human services, poverty reduction, housing, and promoting civility. We need to work together to solve problems that affect us all, especially as funding streams change and we experience funding cuts from the federal government.

What variables are having the biggest impact on community needs, and how will they change the service landscape?

I'm seeing stronger partnerships and more creative approaches to build effective solutions. We are finding innovative approaches in our grantmaking. For example, we partnered with Newaygo County on a housing partnership in which we stimulated development of 159 housing units in the past two years.

We engage in what we call positive disruption, which is proactively engaging in an action to create a ripple effect of good. The housing partnership is a good example. We also provide impact investing loans, which support economic development projects with social impact.

How is Fremont Area Community Foundation adapting to evolving community needs?

We're trying to find ways to streamline our funding. We're convening about community issues to leverage partnerships and solutions that impact the environment, housing, food insecurity, and more. We are working with smaller groups to address civil discourse and how to talk to one another again in a way that brings about solutions rather than differences.



FREMONT AREA
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GIVING THROUGH YOUR IRA

Phyllis Crandell and her husband, Richard, were the third generation of the family to own and operate Crandell Funeral Homes in Fremont and White Cloud. The family created a scholarship in Richard's memory, and Phyllis made a qualified charitable distribution from her IRA to support the scholarship and local students.

Giving through an IRA is a simple way to support your community. People aged 70 ½ or older can transfer up to \$108,000 from their IRA as a qualified charitable distribution and avoid including the distribution in their income. The gift also qualifies for all or part of a required minimum distribution.

Interested in learning more? Contact our philanthropic services team at 231.924.5350.