New year, new leadership

Tom Tacia becomes board chair

We are starting 2022 on a new foot and with a new board chair. We are excited to welcome Tom Tacia as the Community Foundation’s new board chair!

Chair’s note

The year is off to a busy start in Mecosta County. We are excited to continue supporting the community through all the changes and opportunities it will face in the coming year.

It is our goal to be flexible and provide resources needed by our community partners to serve the residents of Mecosta County. We are starting off the year with our spring grant round. Applications are due April 1 and we look forward to connecting with our partners and focusing on their needs.

As high school seniors prepare to take the next steps after graduation, we are excited to assist them through our scholarship round. The Community Foundation awards scholarships annually which provide financial support for students in Mecosta County. Students can apply online. The annual deadline is March 1.

We are also excited to continue working with our donors in 2022. Without their generosity, none of our work happens. We strive to connect their philanthropic goals with the needs in the community. We thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Tom Tacia
Board Chair
Continued from page 1

Tom Tacia has served on the executive committee of the Board of Trustees for four years and his experience allows for a smooth transition in leadership. We are excited to have Tom lead the board and enhance the work that was started 30 years ago.

We are grateful for the service of our previous chair, Kim von Kronenberger, who is remaining with the Community Foundation board. Over the last two years, Kim has led the board through some challenging times, with most of his term spent in the virtual world. He guided the board in our continued giving within the community and in our quick response to pandemic-related issues.

Along with our board chair, other members of the Community Foundation’s executive committee are Laura Rhoades, Matt Currie, Dr. Ralph Crew, and Kim von Kronenberger.

While we still don’t know all that 2022 will bring, our executive committee is ready to guide us through it and enhance the quality of life in Mecosta County.

Strengthen your giving

Many of us want to get involved in the community, but we may not always know where to start. Some of us have time to offer, some have a specific talent to give, and some have other resources to share.

Resources don’t always have to come in large sums, especially when it comes to money. The Community Foundation is always looking for ways to make it easier for individuals to give. We would love to talk with you about how you can give in the future, but there are also options to give today.

Not only can you give through check or cash, but you can also conveniently give online at tfacf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate. Through this method, you can set up a recurring gift to a specific fund within the Community Foundation. You can choose whatever amount you would like to give on a more regular basis. Then, you can decide to give monthly, quarterly, or annually. It’s a hassle-free way to make a regular gift. Recurring gifts also help the Community Foundation build a sustainable future through consistent giving. We would love to talk with you about setting this up and look forward to working with you.
Feeding Mecosta County

Hunger does not affect the population equally and the pandemic has only heightened food insecurity for many in our area. For these neighbors, multiple organizations in Mecosta County help provide food and other resources during difficult times. With grants from the Community Foundation, food pantries such as Feeding America West Michigan, Manna Pantry, and Project Starburst can operate in a flexible capacity to meet changing needs.

Mobile food pantries have become especially important during the pandemic. A grant to Feeding America West Michigan enabled the organization to solidify the mobile pantry’s presence in the community and to cultivate strong partnerships with local organizations.

Manna Pantry of Big Rapids was also positively impacted by a grant from the Community Foundation. Manna Pantry brings fresh fruits and vegetables, along with other items, directly to individuals—especially older adults—ensuring a dependable source of food and essentials.

Sometimes food assistance is about efficiency. A grant to Project Starburst helped the organization replace food storage shelving units. They were also able to provide gas cards to help people get to medical appointments, work, childcare, and to apply for services for basic needs.

Together with the resources of Feeding America West Michigan, Manna Pantry, and Project Starburst, Community Foundation grants helped provide food for hundreds of families. Without partnerships like this, we would not be able to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Engaging youth in philanthropy

Mecosta County Youth Advisory Council

A very important component of the work of many community foundations is our youth advisory councils. In the early 1990s, Michigan community foundations began forming these councils to oversee endowed youth funds and provide greater youth voice in philanthropy. Our Mecosta County Youth Advisory Council (MCYAC) allows us to involve youth in the work we do and benefit from their perspectives and insight. Students meet monthly throughout the school year to work together as a team, develop leadership skills, and have fun.

“We get the opportunity to provide for youth in our community and be a part of something much bigger,” said Ella Bollman, MCYAC president. “It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as youth to be involved in giving back to our community in such a unique way. We have the power to influence our generation.”

MCYAC members have the opportunity to work with students from all four school districts to make decisions on how Community Foundation funding can impact local youth. They provide grants for youth-based services in Mecosta County, not only in the school districts, but also to nonprofits serving youth. They also participate in various fundraisers to help bring awareness to some of the great nonprofits serving the community.
Sometimes just finding enough food to feed your family for the weekend is all you can think about.

There isn’t enough time or energy left over to find out where there are fun family activities happening or how you can get involved in the community. Angels of Action is working to make sure families have the food they need and are aware of activities to get involved in together.

Angels of Action launched a program called Power Packs to provide families a weekend meal to prepare and eat together. Packs even include fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy snacks.

In addition to food, Power Packs include information about local activities and events and how to access them. They also feature educational information about living a healthy lifestyle, including tips on disease prevention, overall wellness, and how to engage in the community.

“The family unit is so important to the success of our community,” said Joni Thompson, CEO and executive director of Angels of Action. “By providing the basics, we can start to help build more opportunities for these families to get connected in the community. It is important to the success of our community for everyone to be involved.”

Last summer, almost 1,200 Power Packs were provided in Mecosta and Osceola counties over 11 weeks. The Community Foundation is proud to play a part in great projects like this.
The Pine River Area Historical Society (pictured on front page) is just one organization that has benefited from Dave B For 30 years, the Community Foundation has been committed to providing for residents of Mecosta County. With so much change happening all the time, our goal was to provide a consistent source of support for local organizations to look to.

In 2022, we are focusing on some specific areas we want to impact to create positive change in our community. We will be undertaking action planning this year that will help guide our ability to provide for area organizations. We look forward to the future and are excited to share our findings with you when they are identified.

The Community Foundation is committed to serving Mecosta County residents through our partner organizations. Through the action-planning process, we plan to create efficiencies and better engage with our donors to fulfill the needs of the community. We are excited to engage in planning as we continue to adapt in these ever-changing times.

Future giving, starting today

Ways to give to the Community Foundation

“Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.” -Albert Camus

With the uncertainty of the past two years, and while navigating the changing world, one thing has remained constant: we are grateful for this community’s support. We are strongest when we work together.

While the generosity of donors allows us to help our community today, what about the future? When looking ahead, a bequest in a will is one of the simplest and most popular ways to leave a legacy for the benefit of your community and for future generations.

To enhance the quality of life in Mecosta County, we need generous donors and supporters like you. We provide many options for you to give to various funds, including cash, check, stock, online giving, and through estate planning. No matter your personal goals, we are here to help you connect them to the needs of the community. We encourage you to visit our webpage at facommunityfoundation.org/mccf to learn more about our giving opportunities.

Building a sustainable future

2022 action planning

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The connection between giving and receiving is what the Community Foundation is all about. Our goal is to provide long-term, sustainable resources for the community to thrive on forever. We can’t do this without the generosity of our donors and their desire to give back.

We work with our donors to understand what is most important to them, identify their passions, and help them achieve their unique goals. For some, strengthening education is an important cause. For others, protecting natural resources is where their hearts are. Some donors would simply like to benefit Mecosta County in general. For these donors, giving to unrestricted funds allows them to support our annual grant rounds.

Community Foundation grant rounds are open to all nonprofit and government entities and are made possible by individuals who give unrestricted or field of interest gifts. To help increase our capacity and provide a new opportunity for our donors, we are going to be implementing a new practice in 2022.

Beginning this spring, our donor advised fundholders will also be able to play a part in our grant rounds. Donor advised funds are created by donors who want to be more involved in the direction of their gift and make grant recommendations. New this year, these donors will also see the grant requests submitted during the Community Foundation’s grant rounds and then have the opportunity to help fund requests.

We are excited to offer this new opportunity and engage with our donors in a new way. If you are interested in creating a donor advised fund, please reach out to Sarah Dixon at 231.924.5350.
## 2021 Financials

*Impact by the Numbers*

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<th>Category</th>
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All data as of September 30, 2021
Supporting our recycling future
Recycle of Mecosta County

In 1989, Recycle of Mecosta County began as a newspaper drive on the back of a semi-trailer. They have now grown to have two full-time staff members and two part-time staff. They also have increased their equipment capacity with five compactors, a box truck, and a forklift. They collect 600-800 tons of materials per year.

That kind of volume takes a toll on equipment. A reliable forklift is crucial to efficiency, but the forklift used by Recycle Mecosta County was 17 years old and in need of being replaced.

The Community Foundation provided a grant to help Recycle of Mecosta County purchase a new forklift. Caring for the environment is important to the Community Foundation and this grant allowed us to continue helping protect our natural resources through recycling.