

IMPACT



INSIDE:

The latest event in our Stronger Together Series discussed age and belonging.
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FREMONT AREA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

SPRING 2021

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The world looks different than it did last March.

As we grapple with the realities of a full year lived under a worldwide pandemic, we remain so grateful for the optimism and resilience found here in Newaygo County. At the Community Foundation, we have continued to maintain our COVID-19 relief efforts such as the Community Response Fund and the Small Business Recovery Loan Program (read more on page 10).

Last fall we awarded nearly \$2.7 million in grants to nonprofit organizations across our community. Currently, our community investment team is hard at work reviewing the latest grant applications to be awarded in June.

The search to find our next president and CEO is underway. We announced the retention of Kittleman and Associates, a national executive search firm, to work with our local search committee to find dynamic candidates who could guide our organization into the future. In the meantime, Carla Roberts remains on staff and active as she nears her projected retirement by the end of 2021.

We kicked off our Stronger Together Series in November. This series of conversations with our neighbors explores issues of inequality and inclusion. During the livestream on November 5, Newaygo County natives Razel Jones and Daniel Abbott read excerpts from their book *Wounds: A Collaborative Memoir in Stories* and shared some of their experiences growing up in Newaygo County as Black and white men (respectively). We were thrilled with the audience engagement that night and were pleased to see many of you back for our second event last month. Read more on page three.

Our work would not be possible without you! We can't wait to see what we accomplish together this year.

THE STRONGER TOGETHER SERIES



STRONGER TOGETHER SERIES CONTINUES

The Stronger Together Series—which kicked off in November with a powerful conversation about race—continued on February 25 with a virtual event exploring how age impacts our experience and sense of belonging in a community. Abby Reeg, executive director of the Newaygo County Community Collaborative (NC3), moderated a panel discussion that featured local residents of

different ages discussing stereotypes, where they've noticed ageism, and what an age-inclusive community might look like. At the Community Foundation, we've been thrilled by the response to these important conversations about difference, identity, and the stories that shape us. Our next event will take place in April.

STANLEY STROVEN

For 90 years, Stanley Stroven lived, worked, and served in Fremont. "It was his home," said his late daughter, Susan Seator. "He had a deep faith in God and a great love for his family and the community he lived in."

In addition to running a farm and dairy, Stanley was active in Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, and the boards of several local organizations, including the Community Foundation. When his children joined a club, Stanley signed up to help too. He took 4-H groups on trail rides and got involved in Boy Scouts with his son Bill, who later served as an Air Force captain in Vietnam and remains missing in action.

In retirement, Stanley enjoyed traveling to visit Susan's family, who lived abroad. He volunteered at track and swim meets in Indonesia and Thailand and loved to cheer on his grandkids. Then, when he returned home, he jumped right back into his local work, staying happily busy until he passed away in 2000.

Stanley's commitment to his community continues today with an unrestricted fund created through his estate. "We're so grateful Dad chose the Community Foundation to be the recipient of his trust," said Susan. "This organization has been such a wonderful asset to the community for so many years and we hope his fund will help whatever the greatest needs are."



recent grants

Our Board of Trustees approved \$5.3 in grant requests in our 2020 grant rounds. Here are a few highlights!

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA)

\$22,000

PURPOSE:

To provide general operating support and funding for programs to educate and engage residents of the Muskegon River Watershed area.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Each year, MRWA engages residents in a wide variety of activities like planting rain gardens, stream monitoring, seminars, and more. Through these and other “learning-by-doing” activities, local residents learn more about natural resources in our area and how to protect them.



Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (NC RESA)

\$160,000



PURPOSE:

To support a program strengthening the integration of college and career access services through the Newaygo County Area Promise Zone and WE CAN! Newaygo County.

WHY IT MATTERS:

The Promise Zone and WE CAN! Newaygo County work closely to promote a culture of career and college awareness and attainment in our area. In addition to the array of other services and resources, NC RESA has added a Success Coach to help local college students address barriers.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

\$28,670

PURPOSE:

To support Vera's House as well as the church's Justice Street Pantry and Groceries to Go program.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Local families continue to face food scarcity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Groceries to Go provides families with a recipe card and a grocery bag containing all the ingredients needed to make a meal. Originally planned to continue for four months, the program has since been extended twice.



Insight Pregnancy Services

\$6,000



PURPOSE:

To support training for Insight's staff as they begin a new medical services program. The program will add the capability for obstetrical ultrasounds and testing for sexually transmitted infections.

WHY IT MATTERS:

By offering obstetrical ultrasounds and testing services, Insight will have more resources to help local people experiencing unplanned pregnancies. These new services will join an array of other programs, including healthy pregnancy support and parenting classes.

Newaygo County Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (PCA)

\$11,000

PURPOSE:

To support PCA's new Kids Have Rights program, a series of developmentally appropriate, child-friendly lessons on body safety for kindergarten through fourth-grade students.

WHY IT MATTERS:

One in four girls and one in six boys experience sexual abuse before they turn 18. Kids Have Rights is designed to educate and empower children and adults to recognize and prevent abuse and to know how to get help for themselves or someone else.



enrichment with local impact

grant public schools after school program

Grant Public Schools has the largest after school program in Newaygo County. For 30 years, school staff has sought to provide a safe place to spend time after school while also incorporating a wide range of fun and educational activities.

“Our main goals are to improve enrichment opportunities and have a local impact,” said Stephanie Dood, teacher and co-director of the after school program. “We want to make the biggest impact we can. This is not just a place to go to be watched. We’re a safe haven and a place to build skills.”

Each day, students can get involved in a variety of creative enrichment programs such as meeting with a reading interventionist, trying yoga, or listening to books in Spanish and English during read aloud time. A

partnership with MSU Extension also incorporates science and environmental activities.

Another new addition has been theme-based Lego projects. In November, students used Legos to create open hand sculptures featuring the Community Foundation logo as a way to celebrate National Philanthropy Day and express gratitude for the Community Foundation’s support.

“If it weren’t for the Community Foundation, we couldn’t do this,” said Stephanie. “We couldn’t serve over 100 kids or employ over 30 people.”

The program’s impact also extends beyond students and families to local small businesses and organizations. They’re committed to buying food, books, and other materials locally

whenever possible and are connecting with organizations like Camp Newaygo to offer workshops and new programming.

“We have so much gratitude for our local partners,” said Stephanie. “We’re connecting with people who know the area, understand the needs, and can be flexible.”

These partnerships and the efforts of the dedicated staff are allowing Grant to meet the diverse needs of students in innovative ways each day after school.

“My passion is figuring out what the need is and how to meet it,” said Stephanie. “It’s about creating exceptional opportunities. Every day we get two hours with a group of kids to do something amazing.”





philanthropy at work

James and Jamie King

James King was introduced to the power of philanthropy early in life. When he came to live with his grandmother in Fremont as a child, he had a front row seat to what he now realizes was the beginning of Fremont Area Community Foundation. James's uncle Bob Magee was a son-in-law to William Branstrom and James remembers listening during family dinners as the adults talked.

Philanthropy often came up around the table, especially the importance of money raised locally being invested locally. This belief and the passion of these community leaders—a group that would include Bessie Slutterback and others—grew into what is now the Community Foundation.

While James and his wife Jamie live primarily in Arizona, they still spend time every year in the Emerald Lake cottage that James inherited from his grandmother. The cottage, time with relatives, and friendships in Newaygo County keep them connected to James's hometown. "The closeness of a small town was beneficial to me growing up," said James. It also sparked an interest in lakes, plants, and nature. "Growing up here, close to nature—being in a small town gave me that," he said.

James followed that interest to a PhD in geosciences and a career running museums like the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh. Throughout his career, James saw the power of philanthropy at work again.

"I know how important the money people gave to my institutions was," said James. "I have seen what can happen when people help a little. So now I'm trying to help a little."

James and Jamie are both involved with foundations in their home areas. Here, James has created two funds at the Community Foundation: a scholarship and a fund to support Fremont's library, a place he loved as a boy.

"I'm not rich, but I've seen how modest amounts can grow and make a difference," said James. "Capital, when properly managed by a foundation, can grow over time. I have seen it in action my whole life and it led me to this."



OUR NEXT 75

Don and Ann Bont

In 1971, Don Bont was hired as the director of Newaygo County’s new Career-Tech Center. “The work to put it together was daunting, creating something from nothing,” Don said. “We were humbled that we could provide so much for kids and the community.” Around the same time, Don met Ann, a teacher in Fremont, and the couple were married in 1974. Throughout the years, the couple shared a commitment to support their community in various ways, including by becoming foster parents and Young Life mentors. Don also served as a trustee on the Community Foundation’s board. Although the Bonts primarily reside in the warm climate of Arizona these days, the couple still considers Newaygo County home and their donor advised fund at the Community Foundation ensures they can continue to support the community they love.

Why is giving important to you?

Ann: We both grew up in homes where we were taught to give.
Don: There are so many needs in this world. We always felt that even though we’re not rich, we have more than we need.

Why give through the Community Foundation?

Don: Because small gifts can help a lot. The Community Foundation provides the vehicle to make an impact. It can be overwhelming if it’s just me, just one person. But it isn’t just me if I use the Community Foundation as the catalyst. As a collective group, we can make a real solid impact.

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

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



pro - advice

CATHY KISSINGER AND SCOTT SWINEHART
Financial advisors

IDEAS FOR THANKING YOUR FAMILY

Even in challenging times, you can probably still find things for which you can be thankful—such as your family. How can you show your appreciation for your loved ones in a tangible way? Here are a few suggestions:

Invest in your children's future. If you have young children or grandchildren, one of the greatest gifts you can give them is the gift of education. You may want to consider contributing to a higher education funding vehicle.

Be generous. Do you have older children just starting out in life? If so, they could use a financial gift to help pay off student loans, buy a car, or even make a down payment on a home. You can give up to \$15,000 per year per recipient without incurring gift taxes. You could also consider presenting your children with shares of stock in companies they like.

Review your insurance coverage. If you weren't around, it would leave some gaping holes—financial and otherwise—in the lives of your family members. That's why it's essential to maintain adequate life insurance. There's no magic formula for determining the right amount of coverage, so you'll have to consider

a variety of factors like your age, spouse's income, number of children, and so on.

Preserve your financial independence. Consider investing regularly in your 401(k), IRA, and other retirement accounts. The greater your resources during your retirement years, the less you may need to count on your family. You may also want to protect yourself from the costs of long-term care. A financial professional can suggest a strategy to help you cope with these expenses.

Create an estate plan. You don't have to be wealthy to leave a legacy to your family, but you do need a comprehensive estate plan. You'll have to think through a lot of questions, such as: Have I named beneficiaries for all my assets? How much do I want to leave to each person? Do I need to go beyond a simple will to establish an arrangement such as a living trust? For help in answering these questions, we recommend working with an attorney.

Cathy Kissinger and Scott Swinehart are both financial advisors with Edward Jones and members of the Community Foundation's Professional Advisors Board.

noteworthy



STAFF PROMOTIONS

It's a new year with new titles for two of our staff. Lindsey Slater moved from our front desk to the finance department. As a finance associate, Lindsey will work with gift processing, database management, and more. Maria Gonzalez also has a new title—director of affiliates and supporting organizations—to reflect her increased responsibilities with our three geographic affiliates and two supporting organizations. Congrats, Lindsey and Maria!

RECOVERY LOANS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The Community Foundation's \$3.4 million Small Business Recovery Loan Program—run in partnership with MSU Federal Credit Union—continues this year to assist local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information or to see if your small business is eligible for a loan ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, visit facommunityfoundation.org/small-business-recovery.



BRIDGING GENERATIONS FUND

*A supporting organization of
Fremont Area Community Foundation*

BRIDGING GENERATIONS FUND

The Elderly Needs Fund is now the Bridging Generations Fund! While the longtime fund continues to award grants to benefit and enrich life for older adults in Newaygo County, the new name reflects a commitment to reframe the way we talk about aging in our community and support programs that encourage intergenerational partnerships.

recently

CARLA A. ROBERTS
President and CEO



The weather lately hints at spring, but as any Michigan resident knows, we're not out of the woods yet. It's not so different from where we are with the COVID-19 pandemic. The end is in sight, vaccines are becoming available, and the death toll will slow, but we know it is not over.

The effects of the pandemic will be with us for quite some time. We do not yet know the full extent of the emotional and mental health trauma or how systems such as education will be impacted. And while some businesses thrived, others suffered or even closed.

Crises reveal flaws in infrastructure. COVID-19 is no different. I'm reminded of a photo that appeared in many newspapers after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans: a massive crowd of people trapped on a bridge—literally being prevented from evacuating. It struck me deeply and I instantly knew I was witnessing what happens when you are poor. You are locked out or locked in. You are prevented from moving forward.

In 2020, the cracks in our society and infrastructures came apart at the seams. The workers who were needed the most in our communities were also those most at risk. Not just medical professionals, but sanitation

workers, truck drivers, grocery store workers, farmworkers, and home caretakers kept our society functioning while trying to stay safe and support their own families. Many of these people worked more than one job to make ends meet, some lost jobs, some were sick without access to paid leave, and some had to quit to care for children or other family members. As evidenced by high utilization of food trucks and pantries across the county, many families slipped below the poverty line.

The Community Foundation started the Community Response Fund in early 2020 to support immediate needs such as food assistance related to the pandemic and continues to support local organizations through our annual grantmaking. Though small businesses in Newaygo County fared better in general than many across Michigan, most struggled at some level. That's why we created the Small Business Recovery Loan Program, which allocated over \$3.4 million in possible loans for businesses in Newaygo County.

Through all the trials in the past year, we were so encouraged by the collaboration and generosity across our community. The Community Foundation will continue to be here, committed to this important work of recovery, *for good, forever.*



FREMONT AREA
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BUILD-A-FUND

After the sale of her final market steer at the Newaygo County Agricultural Fair, Julee Tellkamp decided to use what she earned to help more kids get involved in the fair. With the Community Foundation’s build-a-fund program, Julee created a fund in her parents’ names to support other youth who want to raise animals for the fair. Still a teenager when she made her donation, Julee is our youngest-ever fund creator.

The build-a-fund program allows donors at all ages and stages to create a fund and then gradually build up to the fund minimum over five years. Interested in learning more about starting a build-a-fund? Contact our philanthropic services team at 231.924.5350.