

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Holly Johnson, President
Grand Haven Area Community Foundation
616-842-6378

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Community Foundation Grant Bridges Gap in Trail System

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF) is pleased to announce seven second-round grant awards totaling \$285,000 to support the northern Ottawa County community, including a \$125,000 grant to the Ottawa County Parks Foundation for their Grand River Explorers Trail – Sterns Bayou Connector.

Ottawa County hopes to expand recreational opportunities and increase access to nature to create a healthier and more economically vibrant community, and the 26-mile Grand River Explorers Trail, which will connect Grand Rapids with the lakeshore, is one part of that goal.

“This very generous gift from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation provides a real boost to our Grand River Greenway Campaign,” said Tom Werkman, President of the Ottawa County Parks Foundation. “In particular, this major grant will help ensure that the Grand Haven area is connected to our beautiful Grand River Greenway parks and the M-231 Grand River Bridge trail. The Ottawa County Parks Foundation is excited to have the Community Foundation’s support for this project, which we believe will transform the community and help reconnect people to the Grand River.”

The grant from the GHACF will fund a trail on the 2.4 mile gap between Connor Bayou and the Grand Haven Township Mercury Drive Pathway, as part of the growing regional trail system around the Grand River. A pedestrian crossing over the bayou will also be included in the funding. Plans are already in place to connect Connor Bayou, Riverside County Parks, and the M-231 Grand River Bridge in Robinson Township.

Other grants awarded:

- **Tri-Cities Broadcasting Foundation** – \$12,000 for a Mobile Studio.
- **Tri-Cities Family YMCA** – \$45,000 for the Learning Tree Preschool Expansion. (\$15,000 from YAC)
- **First Christian Reformed Church of Grand Haven** – \$10,000 for Securing Transportation for Appliance and Recycle Ministries.
- **Extended Grace** – \$40,000 for the Momentum Center for Social Engagement.
- **Mercy Health Muskegon** – \$50,000 for the Mercy Health Muskegon Medical Center.

In addition, the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation Youth Advisory Council (YAC) awarded \$3,000 to **Junior Achievement of the Michigan Great Lakes** for their Empower the Youth of Grand Haven program.

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving the Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, companies, and organizations, and serves as a steward of their charitable funds and legacies. In addition to grants, the Foundation offers technical support to nonprofits, convenes community leaders on issues of importance, and engages in advocacy work with nonprofits primarily focused on the needs of the most vulnerable members of the Northwest Ottawa County community. For more information, or to give a tax-deductible gift to the Greatest Needs Fund at the Foundation, visit ghacf.org or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/grandhavenareacommunityfoundation.

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