

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Foundation Awards Grant to Help Preserve Natural Resources

The Board of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF), together with the GHACF Youth Advisory Council (YAC), is pleased to announce seven third-round grant awards, totaling \$539,339, to support the Northwest Ottawa County community, including a \$40,000 grant to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM) for Ottawa Sands, the newest park in Ottawa County.

The 345-acre former Ottawa Sands property in Ferrysburg, which is located on the north bank of the Grand River, will be the final link in a 2,000-acre chain of parks and natural areas stretching from Hoffmaster Park to the Grand River. The land includes 219 acres of critical dune, an 80-acre lake, and over one mile of Grand River frontage. By turning it into a park, the LCWM will help preserve the shoreline dune habitat and its natural resources, create a new area for community activity in nature, and support the local economy.

“Ottawa Sands will give residents and visitors to our community access to trails and a lake for hiking, camping, swimming, fishing, and kayaking—all along the north bank of the Grand River,” said Holly Cole, Director of Grants & Program at the GHACF. “It is a community treasure that we will enjoy for generations.”

Once the remaining funds are secured for the park, the ownership will be transferred from the LCWM to the Ottawa County Parks Department.

Other grants awarded:

- **Community Foundation for Muskegon County** – \$50,000 for The Frauenthal Center: Sharing the Stage Campaign. The endowment will provide a sustainable funding stream for improvements, repairs, and community programs at the Frauenthal Center, as well as support the maintenance of manageable rental fees for local community organizations.
- **No More Sidelines** – \$100,000 for the Building Belongings Campaign (including \$15,000 from YAC) to renovate the athletic facilities at the Folkert Community Hub. Renovations will include the addition of a basketball court, soccer and volleyball area, walking track, multi-function room, as well as spaces for spectators. No More Sidelines currently serves approximately 10% of the special-needs population in Ottawa,

Muskegon, and Oceana counties, and this expansion and renovation will provide increased capacity and higher quality programming.

- **Ottawa County Administrator's Office** – \$234,507 over five years toward the creation of an Ottawa County Diversity and Inclusion Office. The goal is to create better functioning government bodies and remove implicit bias in policies, procedures, and services while building stronger ties with minority communities.
- **Grand Rapids Community Foundation** – \$75,000 over three years for the Our LGBT Fund (including \$10,000 from YAC), which strives to end LGBT youth homelessness in West Michigan by providing financial support to organizations and programs specifically designed to combat this issue.
- **Pathways of Arbor Circle** – \$24,832 for Ottawa Substance Abuse Prevention NW Quadrant Rebuilding (including \$5,000 from YAC). This project will form a coalition that will work to reduce youth's access to drugs and alcohol, educate them about the harm these substances can cause, and engage the community to assist with prevention.
- **Harbor Humane Society** – \$15,000 for Kennel Rehabilitation. Updating and refurbishing the dog kennel area will create a cleaner, safer, and more sanitary space for animals and visiting community members. The expansion will also allow the Reading with Fido program, which builds self-confidence and safe space for youth, to be further developed.

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. GHACF is regularly recognized as a top 100 Community Foundation in the nation and is the 7th largest community foundation in the State of Michigan. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, corporations, and organizations, and serves as a steward of their charitable funds and legacies. In addition to awarding grants, the Foundation offers technical support to nonprofits, convenes community leaders on issues of importance, and advocates for the nonprofit sector. For more information visit ghacf.org.

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