

# YGC Insider



Grand Rapids

community foundation™

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2010-2011 Youth Grant Committee  
www.grfoundation.org

*The Youth Grant Committee provides funding for programs that address youth needs while teaching youth about leadership, philanthropy and responsibility.*

## 2010-2011 Youth Grant Committee

Tiffany Boorsma, West Catholic  
Max Boorsma, West Catholic  
Chaslyn Burt, Forest Hills Northern  
Hailey Dann, Forest Hills Eastern  
Nnenna Ezeh, Catholic Central  
Sarah Fagerman, East Kentwood  
Aaron Fein, Northview  
Kyrstan Forseman, Grandville  
Mary Jane Gallegos, East Grand Rapids  
Jack Gould, Catholic Central  
Tabitha Haight, City High  
Liz Herman, East Kentwood  
Darryl Johnson, University Prep  
Nick Kooyer, Northview  
Noah Lehmann, Northview  
Caroline Liske, Kelloggsville  
Markyshia Meadows, Ottawa Hills  
Vlastibor Minarovjeh, Forest Hills Central  
Matt Norris, Northview  
Kathryn Nowicki, West Catholic  
Jenna Rood, West Catholic  
Deja Smith, Forest Hills Northern  
Khaysirah Muhammad Smith, East Kentwood  
Khayriyyah Muhammad Smith, East Kentwood  
Victoria Smith, Catholic Central  
Mackenzie Swart, Northview  
Alex Tarr, Caledonia  
Alondra Vergara-Diaz, City High  
Leighton Watson, Lowell  
Dakota Wolter, East Grand Rapids

## 2010-11 Youth Grant Committee Highlights

*By Kathryn Nowicki, YGC Co-Chair*

The Grand Rapids Community Foundation Youth Grant Committee (YGC) consists of 30 outstanding youth that represent a diverse cross-section of the greater Grand Rapids area. Each year the YGC members have the option to begin the new year by attending the **Summer Leadership Conference** at MSU. Here, members learn new and innovative ideas to bring back to the committee the following year. Soon after this conference, all members met at **Little Pine Island Camp** for teambuilding activities that help everyone work together and form bonds that carry on throughout the year.

In the fall, the YGC members organized our annual **volunteer recruitment event**. This successful event took place during Art Prize at the end of September. To draw in people to volunteer, we invited people to use their artistic abilities to color lunch bags that are given out to children receiving sack suppers from Kids' Food Basket. YGC member "street teams" also gave away lanyards to prospective volunteers.

October included a collaborative effort among the YGC members to spread the word to youth in their schools and community. The **needs assessment survey**, which is given out every other year, allows the YGC to better place funds where they are needed most throughout the community.

In November, YGC gathered for the third annual **All-Nighter** where members participated in decorating Kids' Food Basket lunch bags, making blankets, tallying the needs-assessment survey, watching movies and cooking midnight breakfast together.

The YGC also was able to volunteer at Kids' Food Basket in February and participate in an April clean-up at Brower Lake with the **Land Conservancy of West Michigan**.

The **grant reviewing** process began in March with each of the three teams dividing up the 41 various grants that totaled nearly \$175,000. At our meeting in March each team met to discuss and analyze the negative and positive aspects of their grants. After many conference calls and agency meetings, the three groups presented their grant recommendations to the committee as a whole so that an agreement



*Committee members discuss grant requests.*

could be established. Lastly, the final meeting in May consisted of presenting our grant recommendations to the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees for official approval before the final end of the year dinner.

Overall, the YGC worked together to create another successful and gratifying year in the community while also having fun and getting to know many new friends.

## From Trainee to Trustee

By Jenna Rood, Youth Trustee and YGC Member

Behind closed doors at 11:45 AM on the first Monday of every other month, decisions are made, budgets are reviewed, and discussions are initiated. Only those selected to be a member of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation's Board of Trustees have knowledge of the true matters which take place during such exclusive meetings.

For the past year, I've had the opportunity to be a part of this group. Every two months, I skipped a few hours of school, enjoyed a delicious lunch, and learned the importance of the Board of Trustees. As the Youth Trustee on the Board, the mumble jumble of complicated budgets and intricate graphs often left me befuddled; but extensive discussions among the board members taught me the importance of solidarity and the necessary means of establishing it.

My position as Youth Trustee has been a unique and incredible experience. Not only have I met intelligent, wonderful people and learned the technicalities behind serving my community, but have also been given a glimpse into the professional world. Very grateful to have been given such an opportunity, I will always remember the work being done behind those doors, and hopefully with the knowledge I've been given seek to do similar work for my community.



Khayriyyah, Khaysirah, Darryl, Caroline, Hailey, and Youth Trustee Jenna helped ArtPrize visitors decorate bags for Kids' Food Basket.



Liz and Mackenzie tally surveys at the All-Nighter.

Although the need for college preparatory programs are much-needed, the top three programs that the teenagers recognized as being the most helpful are competitive sports (not school-based), arts, music and writing programs or activities, and outdoor activities. The focus of these top-slot programs shows students' need for enjoyable creative outlets where they can develop skills not learned in school.

The 2010 needs survey is an extremely important way for YGC to understand what types of organizations should be most funded. While it was the first year YGC did an online survey, we ended up switching to a paper version to achieve the highest number of surveys. With the new results, YGC was able to make great decisions involving grants!

## Committee members identify youth needs

By Mackenzie Swart, YGC Executive Committee

With around 420 responses to the 2010 Needs Survey, the results are amazing. Every two years, the Youth Grant Committee asks teenagers in the Grand Rapids area to take a survey as a way to assess the areas that teenagers have the most "need." This year's survey had an overwhelming number of students that have issues regarding college. The number-one issue was the pressure to succeed academically, followed closely by paying for college, then getting into college. With college being the common factor in the top three issues that teens face, it is obvious that organizations need to take action, in many cases, with the help of YGC.

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## A look back at YGC 2010-11



Erosion control project at Brower Lake Preserve.



Vlastibor, Victoria, Markyshia, Nnenna, and Chaslyn tally surveys.



Teamwork!

## Taking volunteerism to the streets!

By Tiffany Boorsma, YGC Executive Committee

Aside from evaluating youth needs surveys, revising the grant application process and, of course, analyzing and reviewing grant applications, the committee fills the rest of its time with community service and volunteer projects. Rather than just promote youth volunteerism, the Youth Grant Committee works to be active itself and organizes a number of service projects and activities for throughout the year. From running around downtown Grand Rapids promoting the cause to toughing out the rainy weather at Brower Lake preserving walking trails, the Youth Grant Committee has had quite a varying list of volunteer projects completed this year.

Armed with colorful lanyards and smiling faces, groups of YGC members hit the streets this autumn's past Art Prize to spread the word about volunteering. These "street teams," as they came to be known to the committee, spent their day handing out lanyards and talking to the crowds of Art Prize viewers to explain the fun and benefits of volunteering. The lanyards were provided by the Volunteer Center at the Heart of West Michigan United Way.

Meanwhile, back at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation building, other YGC members were waiving people down with giant signs and chalk arrows pointing to the Kids' Food Basket table they had set up. At the table, YGC members and people from the community got a chance to decorate paper lunch bags for the children that received sack suppers from Kids' Food Basket. Although the day started off fairly chilly, it soon warmed up by the energy, optimism and excitement of the YGC volunteers.

While the YGC members had a number of other volunteer activities that they participated in this year, one new one was the earth preservation work done at the Brower Lake Nature Preserve with a crew from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. Facing dropping temperatures and a light rain throughout the morning, a number of members got in touch with their "earthy" side spending the day filling an eroding walking trail near Brower Lake. Though the work was tough, the volunteers were overall satisfied with the hard work they put in—and, most likely, the workout they got.

Continuing to keep the spirit of service alive and vibrant, the Youth Grant Committee had yet another successful year of volunteering and promoting volunteering in the community.



*Chaslyn and Sarah model the lanyards.*

## Fast Facts about the YGC:

- ◆ Since 1994, the YGC has awarded 214 grants for programs that benefit youth. Those grants total \$955,710.
- ◆ Over 190 young people have participated in the Youth Grant Committee since its inception.
- ◆ The Youth Fund was established with an initial \$1 million gift from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Current value of the endowed Youth Fund is nearly \$1.8million.
- ◆ The 2010-11 YGC has 30 members who attend 15 high schools.
- ◆ In 2011, the YGC reviewed 41 grant proposals totaling nearly \$175,000 in requests.

## Donors Help the Youth Fund Grow!

Gifts to the Youth Fund are permanently endowed, allowing future youth grantmakers to meet the needs of future generations.

Thanks to Barbara and Ronald Feenstra, Mike and Rachel Goorhouse, and Len and Karen Rinke for supporting the Youth Fund this year!



*Far left: Vlastibor tackles a very large pile of dirt.*

*Middle: Krystan and Alondra with repackaged veggies.*

*Above: Kathryn and Tiffany urge ArtPrize visitors to support volunteerism.*

## 2011 Youth Grants

Each year, the Youth Grant Committee engages in an intensive grant review process. In 2010-11, the YGC reviewed 41 grant requests totaling over \$170,000. After many meetings, lots of discussion, and a bit of compromise, 13 grants were recommended to the Board of Trustees for funding. Those grants, totaling \$49,805, were presented at the 2011 Youth Grant Committee Celebration Dinner and Grant Presentation Ceremony on May 19, 2011 at The B.O.B.

**Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired** Summer in the City/STEPS received \$3,000 to offer an eight-day urban day camp program designed to teach independence, transition and life skills to youth with visual impairment ages 14 – 18 years old through practical experience, mentoring and peer support.

**Baxter Community Center, Inc.** 3.0 Gets to Go received \$3,500 to provide the opportunity for students with a 3.0 or higher to participate in summer trips to Canada.

**Calvin College** Engaging Minority Youth in the Sciences received \$3,500 to engage minority youth in a series of chemistry experiences at Calvin College that will help enhance scientific enthusiasm and competency, reduce anxiety toward science, and plant the seed that college is a desirable and attainable goal.

**Certification of the Incarceration** Helping-At-Risks-Youth (H.A.R.T.) received \$3,500 to provide troubled teens/ youth from the Kent County Juvenile Detention Center with skills to change a negative beginning to a positive reentry back into society.



*Deja and Sarah decorate bags at KFB.*

**Comprehensive Therapy Center** Creating Teen Champions - Therapy and Fun received \$3,805 to build community stewards at Therapy and Fun by providing more training and program improvements for teen volunteers so they are better able to help children with disabilities in their jobs as therapy aides.

**Grand Rapids Track Club Summer Youth Program** GRTC/GRPS Elementary Track and Cross Country received \$4,000 to provide mileage clubs, cross country and track and field programs for the kids in the elementary schools in the Grand Rapids Public Schools system.

**Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association** GRWSA's JR. Wheelchair Sports Camp received \$5,000 to request equipment funds (sports wheelchairs, handcycles, hockey sleds) for the Jr. Wheelchair Sports Camp which serves 60+ kids with physical disabilities to explore their opportunities to participate in a variety of sports as their able-bodied peers do.

**Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities** Exploring Our World - Summer Arts Program received \$6,000 to sponsor summer arts programming that would include dance, theater, visual arts (including clay), and music instruction for youth in the Grandville Avenue neighborhood.

**Hispanic Center of Western Michigan** Supporting Our Leaders (SOL) - Cuidate received \$5,000 to compare the effectiveness of Cuidate (Spanish for "Take Care of Yourself") and "Cuidate Plus" culturally based curricula to reduce HIV sexual risk behaviors and increase high school completion rates among local Latino youth.

**Kids' Food Basket** Kids Helping Kids received \$5,000 to allow children receiving sack suppers from Kids' Food Basket to actively participate in the process, while fostering life skills with students from the Hispanic Center and Upward Bound programs who will facilitate the sessions.

**Metro Health Hospital Foundation** Family Bonds: Stronger than Cancer! received \$3,000 to provide emotional support to children and youth struggling with stress, fear, and behavioral issues due to a family member battling cancer.



*Vlasitor, Leighton, Max, Dakota, Jack and Noah unpacking*

**Other Way Ministries** Youth Employment Service (Y.E.S.) Program received \$3,000 to support the employment of 12 teens and 1 teen assistant supervisor over the summer, and provide them with valuable work experience as well as life-skills training empowering them for a brighter future.

**Wedgwood Christian Services, Inc.** Summer Camping and Youth Activity Program received \$1,500 to support camping experiences and summer recreational/wellness activities for approximately 100 young people from Wedgwood's Residential Programs in the summer of 2011.



*Nick, Alex, Matt and Max repackage bagels.*

### Want to join the YGC?

Contact Cris Kooyer at 454-1751 or [ckooyer@grfoundation.org](mailto:ckooyer@grfoundation.org) for an application, or visit [www.grfoundation.org](http://www.grfoundation.org).