

# Community Media Center

Building Community Through  
Citizen Journalism



*The continued decline of local news and information outlets has lead to a need for new platforms and strategies for the community to stay informed. Citizen Journalism is one answer.*

The Grand Rapids Community Foundation and the Knight Foundation believe that communities in a democracy need news and information. In partnership with the Community Media Center, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation was awarded one of 21 Knight Community Information Challenge grants. This challenge grant led to the creation of The Rapiidian (<http://therapiidian.org/>), Grand Rapids' own "hyper-local" news source, which launched in Sept. '09.

The Rapiidian offers a web-based news platform that allows individuals to become "citizen journalists" by collecting and presenting news and information from their neighborhoods. With first year funding from the Community Foundation and Knight Foundation, the Community Media Center was able to develop the site architecture, conduct numerous training sessions for volunteer reporters, and begin to identify local organizations in each quadrant of Grand Rapids that could host news gathering sites. Currently in year two, the project is focused on establishing these local news sites which will be physically located in neighborhood gathering locations.

Each site will be outfitted with video and still cameras, computers, audio recorders and connectivity required to post stories.

Interest in the Rapiidian and traffic on the web site has been impressive. In the first 100 days the Rapiidian received 38,735 visits. They currently have 140 trained reporters and 71 nonprofit organizations that have established accounts to post news stories.

### **This is Community Leadership.**

Were it not for the **leadership** of Grand Rapids Community Foundation staff in seeking the Knight Foundation challenge grant and **providing the impetus** for the project, the Rapiidian would not exist.

## Grant Facts

**Organization:** Grand Rapids Cable Access Center, dba Community Media Center

**Grant amount:** \$73,870

**Grant Purpose:** To continue the development of a neighborhood "citizen journalism" news bureau.

**Web site:** [www.grcmc.org](http://www.grcmc.org)

**Started:** 1980

**Location:** 711 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

**No. /Area served:** All of Grand Rapids

## Ways You Can Help

To help ensure the success of this grant you may give to address any of the needs listed below. Please call the Community Media Center at 616.459.4788 to learn more.

- **Half-time Marketing/Promotion Staff Position** - \$15,000 per year
- **Reporter Packs** - \$1,000 each
- **Specialized Reporting Fund** - to provide specialized journalism training and stipends for skilled reporters to produce assigned stories on under-reported topics. Donations of all sizes welcome.

*To ensure the Community Foundation can make grants like this one in the future, please consider a gift to the Fund for Arts and Social Enrichment. Please call 616.454.1751 to learn the benefits of Community Foundation giving and how gifts can be made.*



**Grand Rapids**  
**community foundation™**

For **good.** For **ever.®**

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