Bryant and Audrey Mitchell
Finding Joy in Giving
Spring 2018 / Volume No. 75

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About the Cover
Bryant and Audrey Mitchell are two of our One Hundred New Philanthropists.

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Bryant and Audrey Mitchell are givers, in every sense of the word. Bryant owns Sunday Dinner, a realty company where clients can pick a charity that aligns with their personal passions. On the clients’ behalf, Sunday Dinner donates 10 percent of commissions earned on their transactions. Audrey is a clinical social worker at Mercy Health Saint Mary’s Hospital.

Bryant and Audrey are proud parents of three-year-old twin boys and a nine-month-old baby girl. They live in Byron Center and love being outside as a family, whether running around in their backyard, riding bikes, enjoying bonfires, camping, hiking or fishing.

Bryant believes it is our responsibility as a community to pour into children as much as possible, and his giving reflects that. He is passionate about the work of 3:11 Youth Housing, HQ Runaway & Homeless Youth Drop-In Center, Kids’ Food Basket, Camp Blodgett and Challenge Scholars.

As a social worker, Audrey supports many causes near to her heart, including mental health, homelessness, substance abuse, sex trafficking and Special Olympics.

On a more personal note, she is especially drawn to organizations and initiatives that help babies in neonatal intensive care units and their families, such as Running for Covers, an organization that raises money to purchase blankets and supplies for babies in a neonatal intensive care unit. “Our twins were born early and, during their NICU stay, each received their own blanket from Running for Covers. They provided our family with a feeling of home away from home, which was so comforting during those first days in the NICU,” Audrey said.

WHY DO YOU GIVE?

“We find joy in the act of giving, whether it be as a tithe to our church, to local nonprofits or someone in need. We believe that when God provides us the ability and opportunity to give—whether financially or with our time—we should follow through,” Bryant said.

WHY GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

Bryant was introduced to Grand Rapids Community Foundation about five years ago, through his involvement with Challenge Scholars. He was partnering with Kay Courtney of Courtney and Associates, along with the Greater Regional Alliance of REALTORS, on a book drive for Harrison Park Elementary School. “At that time, I had no clue that Challenge Scholars was affiliated with the Community Foundation,” he said. “This was my eye opener to the world of giving and how much impact a person can have upon their community. As I continue to learn the vast amount of facets our community has to aid our amazing city, I am developing an even stronger passion for this amazing organization.”

When Audrey learned about the Community Foundation’s work, she was not aware of its community influence either. “The Community Foundation positively impacts our schools, neighborhoods, families and individuals. We feel proud and blessed to be a part of it,” she said.
Nearly $1.8 Million in Great New Grants

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION RECENTLY APPROVED 13 GRANTS AND ONE PROGRAM RELATED INVESTMENT, TOTALING $1,797,500. YOUR GIFTS ARE WORKING TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY AND THRIVING COMMUNITY.

**Great New Grants**

**Grand Rapids Civic Theatre: $2,500**

This grant supported a low sensory performance of Seussical: The Musical for individuals on the autism spectrum or those with diverse sensory needs and their family members.

**Why it matters:** Many individuals with neurological or sensory conditions are unable to attend conventionally-staged live theatre performances due to discomfort caused by the large audience, close seating, bright lights, amplified sounds and other challenges. This performance brought the magic of live theatre to an audience who might not otherwise be able to experience it.

**Ferris Foundation: $150,000**

This grant supports the Latino Business and Economic Development Center at Ferris State University. LBEDC uses entrepreneurial cohort initiatives to address workforce development, economic disparity, civic engagement and overall leadership development in West Michigan’s Latino communities.

**Why it matters:** Latino communities in West Michigan make up a rapidly-growing segment of the population and are positioned to profoundly affect our society and regional economy. However, Latinos are underrepresented in business ownership and entrepreneurial training opportunities.

**Grand Rapids Nehemiah Project: $50,000**

This grant will help fund Rising Grinds Café, a locally-owned social enterprise that provides employment and professional development for youth and adults living in Grand Rapids’ Southtown [aka Madison Square] district.

**Why it matters:** Race and poverty disproportionately reduce opportunities for jobs and career advancement in this area. Rising Grinds offers a model of community-based, locally-owned enterprise to catalyze sustainable growth.

**Hispanic Center of West Michigan: $300,000**

Hispanic Center of West Michigan will use this grant to develop economic opportunity pathways for local Latino communities.

**Why it matters:** New and first-generation immigrant families (youth and adults) often face specific barriers to economic health. This project offers workforce, career and leadership development to increase financial stabilization among Latino communities in West Michigan.

**Kent School Services Network: $500,000**

This grant supports KSSN’s community school coordinators through 2019. Each KSSN site has a community school coordinator to connect students and their families to onsite health, dental, tutoring, mentoring and counseling services. This helps ensure that children are healthy, have their basic needs met and are ready to learn.

**Why it matters:** KSSN is an unprecedented collaboration of major community health and human service providers to support PreK-12th grade students. KSSN evaluation results show promising trends in reducing absenteeism, which is associated with low graduation rates, low test scores and more.

**Kids’ Food Basket Feeding Our Future campaign: $100,000**

This grant will help Kids’ Food Basket move its headquarters to 14 acres of recently-purchased farmland at 1919 Leonard Street N.E. New warehouse, office and volunteer engagement space will double current capacity to provide sack suppers to children living at or near the poverty level.

**Why it matters:** Kids’ Food Basket serves 45 schools and has 27 schools on the waiting list. This land will provide space to host more youth and adult volunteers, produce fruits and vegetables for sack suppers and serve up to 15,000 children. There will be room to teach people how to compost, grow food and preserve farmland.

**Michigan Dental Association Foundation: $5,000**

This grant will support the Mission of Mercy program, which will provide dental care to more than 1,000 West Michigan residents.

**Why it matters:** Many people in our state do not have access to dental care due to lack of insurance, lack of funds or inadequately funded programs.

**Nonprofit Technical Assistance Fund: $40,000**

The NPTA Fund awards grants to Kent County nonprofits for capacity building and technical assistance. These grants help nonprofits hire consultants for planning, information technology, organizational structure, board development, financial management and more.

**Why it matters:** Local existing and emerging nonprofits are doing powerful work. The NPTA Fund pays for consulting services to help them identify innovative ways to take their causes and work to the next level. This helps them achieve greater impact in Kent County.

**Northern Economic Initiatives Corporation: $25,000 and $500,000 (Program Related Investment)**

The $25,000 grant is for outreach and building awareness that Northern Initiatives can provide loans and business services to under-resourced and minority populations in Grand Rapids. The $500,000 PRI is a repayable investment into the Northern Economic Initiative Corporation. The funds will be used for loan capital to help small businesses start and grow in Grand Rapids.

**Why it matters:** According to the Small Business Association, the average minority business operates with substantially less capital overall relative to their non-minority counterparts. The grant and PRI will focus especially on loans to African American and Latino businesses and entrepreneurs. Access to capital and know-how will help them add jobs and benefit communities.
Grand Rapids will always be grateful for Eleanor J. Roberts' brave spirit and openness to travel. These characteristics helped her transition from Detroit to Grand Rapids to continue what became a 42-year career with Michigan Consolidated Gas. She moved here in 1960 to head up MichCon's gas demonstration kitchen. That move, coupled with her heart for philanthropy, will continue to benefit this community in perpetuity.

After her passing on June 16, 2017, her planned bequest established the unrestricted Eleanor J. Roberts Fund at Grand Rapids Community Foundation. Unrestricted funds help support broad, ever-changing community needs. Eleanor's philanthropic interests included the arts, health and education.

Her legacy will also continue through memories of her community involvement. In 1962, Eleanor joined the Quota Club, which provides service and funding for people with hearing loss. She formed lasting friendships there and hosted the Quota Club's 2015 Christmas party at her retirement residence. Her Quota Club friends had a deep affection for her and recall her always being elegant and stylish.

She carried this style to the theater, which she attended with great joy alongside her friend Norma Brink, who co-founded the Grand Rapids Civic and Circle theaters. Eleanor traveled to see Broadway plays in New York and Shakespeare plays at Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario. Her cousin Kent Mudie recalls that she was brave enough to ride a donkey to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

To be remembered for so many great things is truly a mark of a wonderful woman. Eleanor’s legacy will live on through grants made from the Fund for Community Good, and she will remain in Grand Rapids’ heart forever.

Metz Legacy Society Profile
Eleanor J. Roberts

Great New Grants (continued)

**Opera Grand Rapids: $5,000**
This grant was used to support I Dream, a rhythm and blues opera about Martin Luther King Jr.'s final 36 hours. It was performed for free on MLK Day 2018 at Fountain Street Church.

*Why it matters:* As Michigan’s oldest opera company, Opera Grand Rapids is an important part of our artistic and cultural community. The I Dream performance marked the first time Opera Grand Rapids collaborated with other organizations in the annual MLK Day community celebrations.

**Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited: $10,000**
This grant will support creating a new Kent County Inventory and Strategic Plan. It will identify which land needs to be purchased and preserved and which Kent County streams need improvement.

*Why it matters:* This strategic plan will help our community prioritize and address conservation efforts to improve water quality, habitat and our environment.

**Start Garden: $100,000**
This grant supports the “100 Ideas” initiative to revitalize entrepreneurship in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods in Grand Rapids through access to financial capital and entrepreneurial supports.

*Why it matters:* Despite an increased entrepreneurial spirit in our area, access to real opportunity continues to be a struggle—particularly for women and minority-owned businesses. This initiative will minimize risk for marginalized entrepreneurs who lack access to resources and capital for growing their businesses. It will give opportunities to often neglected communities, especially in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**Urban Roots: $10,000**
This grant supports developing a Sharing Garden training program to build community and support educational gardens throughout Grand Rapids.

*Why it matters:* Well managed and used gardens foster true community, multigenerational interactions and larger harvests. However, many school and community gardens struggle to set up, develop and promote themselves. This training program will address these problems and identify real solutions to help them avoid pitfalls and create sustainable gardens.

You can become a Metz Legacy Society member by including the Community Foundation in your will, estate plan or life income gift. To learn more, please contact Marilyn Zack or Jenine Torres at 616.454.1751.
How can a 21st-century community foundation help build an inclusive economy and thriving community? For the past year, Grand Rapids Community Foundation has been on a quest to answer this question. We have engaged in an adaptive strategic process and adopted a new North Star to sit alongside our mission and vision. This led us to a fresh new direction—something that challenges us to think differently about our work and role in the community.

Throughout this process, we’ve been reminded that the community is the constant and the expert. As the community’s foundation, it is up to us to tap into and channel that potential. The Community Foundation has a strong network of donors who want to make greater impact. West Michigan also has a diverse community of emerging nonprofits doing powerful work at every level; however, many remain unknown because they have been unable to get their foot in the door. Our role is to be the connection, help shine light on what our community of donors and nonprofits are trying to do, and identify innovative ways to help them take their causes and work to the next level.

Community Foundation staff members Janean Couch and Ben Oliver have been charged with leading the team to discover how our traditional grantmaker role must evolve to better align with our North Star. Janean is our program director, and Ben is our Challenge Scholars advisor. Both have formal training in human-centered design, a problem-solving framework rooted in empathy. Human-centered design focuses on developing a deeper understanding of people and questioning assumptions.

“The vision is bigger than just the Community Foundation. When we’re looking at creating an inclusive economy and thriving community, we’re just one player in that. It’s not about us. It’s not what we think should happen. It’s asking, ‘How do we bring people together to collectively decide what we think we should do? What can we co-create?’” Ben said.

We gathered a small sample size of 30 people actively engaged in community work to help us answer these questions. Some were already connected with the Community Foundation, some not. Participants were philanthropists, activists, organizers and direct service providers, including a mix of well-known and emerging community leaders working for grassroots- and systems-level change. The group participated in individual interviews and a follow-up group session, where they shared their unyielding love and passion for the community.

To facilitate this process, we engaged Public Agency, a social enterprise of West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology. Public Agency works with schools, businesses and nonprofits to help foster cultures of collaboration, innovation and action. The goal was to engage participants to detect blind spots, new perspectives and patterns to identify opportunities for redesigning how we serve as a community resource. The process was not about evaluating the Community Foundation’s work or creating issue-specific initiatives. It was about bringing community together to co-create a better process for responding to emerging needs, while systemically eliminating the injustices that fuel them.
“The actual interview process was just an example of how brilliant people are in this community,” Janean said. “It was completely humbling to hear how creatively they’re solving problems in their communities, serving their own communities or using their passions as fuel for change. To hear the passion, engagement and very real desire to see tangible equity was incredible.”

While this phase of the process was never intended to result in a clear next step or action plan, it has helped clarify our role. We are so much more than just a grantmaker. We are a bridge, an intermediary, a facilitator, a convener, an ally and a champion for everyone who calls West Michigan home. The individual and group conversations surfaced issues impacting the community. They dug in to identify underlying forces, exploring what pushes forward and holds back progress.

Insights gathered from these conversations and our staff will be reviewed by a team led by Janean and Ben to identify the best solutions for building trusting relationships with communities experiencing inequities. Ideas will be prototyped and tested. This journey is ongoing. We hope that future conversations will strengthen our community relationships and build on a foundation of trust.

“We have an opportunity to do something that sets a standard for how community foundations work in relationship with their own communities. We can lead the way for our philanthropic community by demonstrating that how we make grants can look different,” Janean said.

And, while the details of how we will lean into our role have yet to be determined, we are confident we are headed in the right direction. By inviting the community into this process, we know we will gain the greatest insight into how we can best support their efforts to build an inclusive economy and thriving community in West Michigan.

“The community is broad, and while we have a lot of exciting growth happening in Grand Rapids, we also have a lot of disparity and opportunity gaps,” Ben said. “So, when we say this has the potential to really help our community come together, I think what we’re really saying is that we’re focusing on marginalized communities, communities that aren’t benefiting from current growth. The value that they bring to this community is untapped. They’ve got the talent. But, will you invest in them? Will you see the value that’s here?”

**This & That**

**Scholarship Deadline Approaching**

Attending college or trade school increases opportunities and opens doors to careers, so let us help you get there! Each year Grand Rapids Community Foundation awards more than $1 million to hundreds of students pursuing post-secondary education. We have scholarships available for students with a wide variety of backgrounds, GPAs, areas of study and levels of education. Visit grfoundation.org to learn more and apply. Applications are due April 1, 2018.

**Sign Up for Summer Camp**

Summer will be here before you know it. Did you know how many local summer camp options there are for kids? Campfires, swimming, academics, the arts—no matter what kids are interested in, there is likely a camp for them. The Community Foundation, through the Mary I. and David D. Hunting Family Fund, maintains westmisummercamps.org, a resource for those looking to attend camp in West Michigan.

**Congrats, Janean Couch**

The Community Foundation is excited to announce the promotion of Janean Couch to program director. In her new position, Janean will take on a leadership role in proactive grantmaking and Fund for Community Good activities. She will also play a key role in initiating new prototypes for our resource allocation activities in alignment with our North Star.

Congratulations, Janean!
With new tax laws and a fluctuating stock market, we have received many questions about how to take advantage of favorable tax benefits associated with donating appreciated assets. We are happy to share how easy it can be to set up a Donor Advised Fund using these assets to receive tax-related advantages. You may also appreciate hearing what two Grand Rapids Community Foundation fund holders say about their Donor Advised Funds.

A Donor Advised Fund is a fund type that allows donors to gradually award distributions to nonprofits of their choice.

Why did you choose to create a Donor Advised Fund at Grand Rapids Community Foundation?

DAVID CASSARD: We had several objectives that were all satisfied by establishing our DAF. We received a current tax deduction for all donations made to the DAF. We are building a fund balance that earns returns from which specific gifts to the charities of our choice are being made. We also named our children as successor advisors for when we are gone. We are involving them in the process of making specific gifts during our lifetimes, so they fully understand our goals and how the process works before we are gone. Finally, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation staff provides us with expert guidance on exactly where the biggest needs are in the community and helps us make fully informed decisions as we make specific grants.

MARGARET IDEMA: Before establishing the fund, I was donating “onesie twosie” grants here and there. Establishing my DAF at the Community Foundation helped me develop my priority areas to make a bigger impact on the areas that I care about most: environment, arts and women. Having my DAF makes it easy to give one gift and decide what organizations to support. I also appreciate the administrative support and how they track gifts and grant distributions.

Tell us about the process to set up the fund. Was it easy? Difficult?

DAVID CASSARD: The process was very simple and easy. We met with the Community Foundation staff and signed an agreement setting up the DAF and documenting terms. The Community Foundation provided transfer instructions, and we simply provided those instructions to the institution that held our securities. That institution completed the transfer, and we received confirmation from the Community Foundation that the transfer had been made. This only took about one hour of our time.

MARGARET IDEMA: Very easy. My advisors and Community Foundation staff handle it all. Previously, when I donated stock to other organizations, it was difficult and there were several steps. The Community Foundation works with my professional advisors to reduce the steps and work required to give stocks.

Why did donating specifically through stocks make sense for you? What were the benefits?

DAVID CASSARD: Donating appreciated securities provides tax advantages beyond those associated with giving cash. The donor receives a deduction for the full value of the stock at the date of the gift—without recognizing any gain that might have occurred during the period the donor owned the stock.

MARGARET IDEMA: Every November, my professional advisors and I meet to discuss my financial and tax situation for the coming year. They recommended that I donate the stock I inherited from my parents to avoid capital gains and the associated tax.

**IMPACT OF DONOR ADVISED FUNDS**

ANNUAL GRANTS AWARDED FROM OUR DAFS PER CALENDAR YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grants Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$3.42M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$4.74M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$5.94M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$3.62M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$6.06M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRANT AREAS MOST SUPPORTED BY DAFS INCLUDE: EDUCATION; HEALTHCARE; ARTS, CULTURE AND HUMANITIES; HUMAN SERVICES; RELIGIOUS-RELATED.

If you’d like to learn more about the flexibility and benefits of using appreciated assets to set up or fund a Donor Advised Fund, contact us! Shaun works with donors establishing new funds. Jonse and Liz offer personalized service to donors once the funds are established. The team can be reached at 616.454.1751.

Shaun Shira  Jonse Young  Liz Warners
I love our community! Our team initiated a social media effort in early February that simply stated, “During #LoveMonth, tell us what you love about Grand Rapids. What makes you excited to live, work, learn and play here? Use #ShareTheLove4GR to let us know!”

We did it not just to feel good but to highlight what we can continue to build upon and encourage in our area. One of our 100 New Philanthropists, Erica Curry VanEe, noted that she loves the people of Grand Rapids: “Each of us carries a different story, comprised of our life experiences, culture, traditions and dreams for the future. Together we make up a powerful mosaic of perspectives and talents that can change the world.” Others said they love Grand Rapids’ festivals, restaurants, entertainment scene, family pride and its many people dedicated to the greater good.

What do we do with our love for our community? All of us need to make certain that everyone has a voice and access to good paying jobs and schools, affordable housing and safe neighborhoods.

I believe that the circle of influence needs to be broadened. That’s why we recently convened 30 people actively engaged in community work, including philanthropists, direct service providers and a mix of emerging and well-known leaders working for grassroots- and system-level change. We are envisioning what our community could become—for all—in five, 10 and even 20 years.

Take a moment to think about why you love Grand Rapids. How might you love it even more if everyone is enjoying the prosperity? As we believe, “It is only by connecting across perspectives and overcoming inequities that we can build and sustain an inclusive economy and thriving community.” I truly love our community!

Our African American Heritage Fund Celebrates Past, Present and Future

Our African American Heritage Fund, a fund of Grand Rapids Community Foundation, was founded in 2007 to focus on empowering and educating African American youth through opportunities and experiences. On February 22, over 70 community members came together to learn about the future of the fund and ways to engage as volunteers.

African American youth and summer learning loss continue to be the focus for the fund’s grantmaking. Participants affirmed this direction and celebrated the tremendous growth the fund has seen. To date, Our African American Heritage Fund has awarded over $35,500 in grants and its total assets are over $225,000.

Looking to the future, Jonse Young, director of philanthropic services, eagerly announced that gifts made to the fund this spring will be matched up to $15,000 from a local donor. You have the opportunity to support this work and double your impact by participating in this matching campaign! Interested in learning more, getting involved, or donating? Contact Jonse Young, director of philanthropic services at jyoung@grfoundation.org, or Janean Couch, program director, at jcouch@grfoundation.org. Visit givegr.org/aahf to give online.

See more pictures from this event on our Facebook page! facebook.com/AfricanAmericanHeritageFund
Commitment and dedication sum up Grand Rapids Community Foundation President Diana R. Sieger, who has provided 30 years (and counting) of service. We are grateful for her and all our donors who have a long history of giving. Here, we recognize our Diana R. Sieger Constant Donor Level members. Each has given annually for the last five consecutive years or more.

Rick and Loy Adamy
Dr. Marc and Mrs. Darcy Afman
Jay Cooper and Eva Aguirre Cooper
Gasper J. Amodeo
Amway
Mark and Wendy Anderson
Anonymous (10)
Mary M. Appelt, M.D.
Paul and Marti Arnold
Joanne Ayotte
Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Ayars
Joanne Ash
Mr. and Mrs. Fred P. Keller

Mr. and Mrs. Paul and Mary Clark
Jim and Pat Clay
Toni Clay
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Ms. Julie Davis
Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Dawksins
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Daryl and Connie Delabbio
Dorothy DeMaagd
Harvey DeMaagd, M.D.
Barbara DeMoor and Clive Morris
Douglas and Maria Devos Foundation
Martha and Nick Dewey
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Nancy L. Douglas
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Patricia H. Edison
John Edison
Mark and Jennifer Ellis
Ben and Susan Emdin
Bill Essling
Hank and Marcia Fairchild
Bill and Kay Farr
Barbara and Ronald Feenstra
Marjorie and David Fernstrum
Gene and Nyla Fonger
Mary and Bill Ford
Barb and Mike Foreman
Henry A. (Happy) Fox Jr.
Thomas S. and Maxine J. Fox and Family
Paula and Michael Freed
Frey Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. David G. Frey
Margaret Gage
The Honorable Patricia D. Gardner and Mr. Kim DeStigter
GE Foundation - Matching Gifts Program
Pat and Patty Geary
Cheryl Gillett
Gene and Tubie Gilmore
Mr. and Mrs. David G. Frey

Keith and Lisa Gohlke
Robert E. Goodrich
Mike and Rachel Goorhouse
Ron and Melissa Gorman
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre
Ken Grashuis and Lori Lockyear
Daniel and Holly Gryzwasz
René and Gary Guttrich
Scott and Gail Haebeich
Lew and Sheryl Haeck
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Mr. and Mrs. William H. Hardy Jr.
Kevin and Laura Harmelink
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Janet A. Haynes
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David Hill and Elizabeth Kidd
Barbara J. Hoag
Mark and Wendy Holtvluwer
Jane Hundelink
Steven and Joan Huysry-Hong
John Hornbach and Darva Boot
Richard and Anne Horvitz
Robert and Eleanor Howesow
Integrity Business Solutions, LLC
Win and Kyle Irwin
Sue Ann Jabin
Cherry and Phil Jacobus
Ms. Janet C. Jensen
Larry and Janine Jewell
Patricia Jones
Dr. Julian and Judith Joseph
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Ruth Kemp
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Kurt and Randy Kimball
Tom and Vicki Kimball
Robert F. King and Mike J. Miesch
Jim and Jane Knack
Garry and Barb Knott
Mr. Kevin Kobila
Douglas and Louann Kohlbek
Janet L. Koopman
Ron and Bonnie Kopp
Jack Korff

Diana R. Sieger Constant Donors

Commitment and dedication sum up Grand Rapids Community Foundation President Diana R. Sieger, who has provided 30 years (and counting) of service. We are grateful for her and all our donors who have a long history of giving. Here, we recognize our Diana R. Sieger Constant Donor Level members. Each has given annually for the last five consecutive years or more.
Names listed are based on our records as of June 30, 2017.

If you would prefer your recognition name to be listed differently, please contact us at 616.454.1751.
Welcome,
Heather Gill Fox

We are pleased to introduce you to Heather Gill Fox, our public relations and marketing specialist. She will work with the team to develop and implement communication strategies and tactics to connect and engage the Community Foundation’s various audiences. Heather was previously the general manager of The Rental Company in Holland, Mich. She has been involved in community work through various volunteer opportunities, including her current role as president of the Holland/Zeeland Young Professionals Board of Directors.

Bon Voyage, Jill Tiefenbach

This February, after 18 years of service, we bid farewell and happy retirement to Jill Tiefenbach, our former administrative assistant for education and leadership initiatives. Her work positively affected thousands of scholarship recipients, volunteers, teachers, Youth Grant Committee members and more. “Jill, we want to thank you on behalf of the community. You are one of the people who constantly had a connection between what we are trying to do and the young people it’s affecting. You should be very proud of the work you’ve done,” said Kate Luckert Schmid, vice president of program. Jill, we will miss you and wish you all the best in your future adventures!

Meet Our New Trustees

The Community Foundation recently elected two new trustees: Kyle Caldwell, executive director for Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, and Kathleen Vogelsang, director-chief investment officer for Van Andel Institute. Kyle has an extensive background in public and philanthropic sectors, including Michigan Community Service Commission, Michigan Nonprofit Association and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Kathleen’s previous involvement with the Community Foundation includes her service on our Investment Review Committee. Kyle and Kathleen are eligible to serve two four-year terms.

“I am excited to have the opportunity to serve Grand Rapids Community Foundation in a larger capacity as a trustee,” Kathleen said. “I have seen the positive impact that the Community Foundation has made in our community, thanks to the dedicated staff and supportive donors. As the need in our community continues to grow, I look forward to working with fellow trustees and staff to increase the impact that the Community Foundation makes in providing a stronger and thriving community.”

“The residents of the Grand Rapids area are shining examples of how people from all walks of life can come together to give and make a difference,” Kyle said. “This giving spirit is reflected in the great work of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation’s staff, board members, donors, nonprofits and volunteers. I am honored and humbled to be asked to serve as a Trustee and really look forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting to work!”