

AN UPDATE FROM YOUR
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
for **MASON COUNTY**



the future of
community



built on a strong **foundation**

Cover photo: KickStart to Career

Inside cover: Photo by Sandcastles Children's Museum

You are improving health, inspiring hope and building a more vibrant community. So many programs and projects are being made possible by your gifts and the impact is clear. Father Marquette Memorial Restoration project. Chamber Leadership Academy. Literacy materials. High school robotics training. Recovery housing. Cancer Wellness Center. Backpack food. Neighborhood revitalization. Safe Zone Summer program. Community development planning. Nearly \$90,000 in scholarships.

The work you support is making lasting, positive change in our community, and we're proud to be your partners.

Like us on Facebook — www.facebook.com/cfmasoncounty — to stay current on what is happening!

Thank you for loving this special place we get to call home.
For Good. For Ever.



Andrea Large

Executive Director



Brad Reed

Chair, Board of Trustees

Here's what you made happen in Mason County:

- **272 grants** were approved totaling **\$1,228,235** to a variety of community projects.
- Mason County's **Youth Advisory Council** approved **9 grants** totaling **\$3,758**, including classroom project grants at school districts in Mason County.
- Awarded **scholarships** to **105** students, including renewals, which represents commitments over the next four years of **\$92,990**.
- **\$1,885,809** in **gifts and grants**, including **\$610,757** in **bequest gifts**.
- **227 first-time donors** for a total of **\$213,027** in **new donor gifts**.
- **52 people memorialized** with gifts to the Community Foundation.
- Created **13 new named funds** for a total of **170 funds**.
- **Net assets: \$19,323,111**





advancing education

Many of the students at **Mason County Eastern School District** show up for school on Monday morning with ravenous appetites, an indication that they did not eat or have access to a sufficient amount of healthy food over the weekend. The **MCE Hand2Hand Backpack Program** partnered with the **Mason County Reformed Church** and the **Mason County Family Link** to provide backpacks full of healthy food for 20 qualifying students to take home and eat over the weekend. This same program is currently operating successfully at **Mason County Central Schools** and served approximately 80 students last school year.



Education access has a dramatic impact on a person's ability to live a successful, prosperous life.

This year, the Community Foundation invested in kids by launching **KickStart to Career** (cover). This program utilizes Children's Savings Accounts, through collaboration with financial partners West Shore Bank and Safe Harbor Credit Union, as a tool to promote pathways to careers. Starting in the 2019–20 school year, a CSA was provided to every kindergartener in Mason County schools with a \$50 savings account with an opportunity for match and incentive dollars. This year, the kindergarten students used their piggy banks to save **\$2,167.19**. What a great first year!

The seed funding for KickStart to Career was made possible through the **John and Anita Wilson Family Fund**. Their investment in the kids of our community will have an impact now and for years to come. Other partners who are committed to providing match and incentive funds include **Lake Michigan CPA Services, West Shore Bank** and the **Robert R. and Joan Hasenbank Fund**.

- **The Mason County Promise** provides students graduating from Mason County Schools with a 2.0 GPA or above two years tuition-free at **West Shore Community College**. In 2019, 170 students were eligible to use the Promise Scholarship, distributing over \$185,000 in scholarships. Of that group, 86 relied on the Promise to pay for classes.





stronger
together

Photo by Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital

The Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital Cancer Wellness Center serves as a place of healing for cancer patients and their families as they travel their difficult cancer journeys.

The new Center, funded in part by a grant from the Community Foundation, includes a lounge, patient information library, relaxation space, massage chair and salon. The salon provides patients the opportunity to receive services such as wig fittings, haircuts, head shavings and assistance with ordering head wraps and scarves.

All patients treated at the **Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital Cancer Center** are welcome at the Cancer Wellness Center. The Cancer Center averages 800 patient encounters each month, an average of 9,600 patient encounters annually.



- Our **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** is made up of 21 students from local high schools. Each fall, they award grants to teachers and organizations that impact young people. In 2019, YAC awarded grants to support the expansion of classroom libraries, school wide-

assembly focused on inclusion, reading interventions, a peer-to-peer program and more. For the first time this year, they participated in a team-building retreat at **Grace Adventures** focused on relationship building, philanthropy and a review of YAC needs assessment data. This will become an annual activity to deepen their leadership in philanthropy skills.





local enhancements

Photo courtesy of Sandcastles Children's Museum

Sandcastles Children's Museum is planning to launch their new water safety exhibit and program, providing critical education on currents, dangerous weather and other conditions, and survival tactics.

They are creating an exhibit that teaches children (and their parents) about water safety, particularly in Lake Michigan. The main feature will be an enclosed water table that vividly shows the action of a current. They will also include a monitor to show videos about swimming and currents, life preservers and instructions on how to use them, and interactive water safety presentations. The museum is partnering with Coast Guard, law enforcement, Ludington State Park, Spectrum Health, Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project and Michigan Sea Grant on the project.

- In an effort to ensure the continuation of the **Western Michigan Fair** and its annual events, it was determined that two of the oldest barns need to be replaced. The Community Foundation awarded a grant to the **Western Michigan Fair Association** to deconstruct the older barns and replace them with two new 100x60 pole barns. The new buildings are safe, aesthetically uniform with the rest of the barns in that location and provide increased room for housing horses, goats and sheep.
- **The Pere Marquette Memorial Association** stepped up to purchase **Pere Marquette Cross Memorial** and engage in renovating and making necessary repairs to the memorial site. Thanks to local donors and a grant from the Community Foundation, the PMMA's goal to restore the cross and ensure it stands for generations to come is well within reach.



Photos courtesy of the Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce and HELP Ministries

Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce designed their Leadership Mason County Program to prepare young professionals for future leadership opportunities — whether it be in their career or in the greater community. We

know great leaders are what keep our community moving forward. Participants worked to develop their personal leadership skills and increase awareness of key community issues and topics.

The Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with several facilitators, local businesses, non-profit organizations, governmental entities, health and human services agencies and more to provide the community awareness component of the program.

- We awarded a grant to the **Mason County Sheriff's Office** to help them provide law enforcement officers in Mason County with rapid response rifle rated ballistic vests, helmets and trauma kits to better protect our citizens and students. These supplies can be rapidly deployed in the event of an active shooter as a continuation of their **school safety planning initiative**, which started in 2015.
- **HELP Ministries'** mission is to compassionately provide basic goods and services needed by the economically disadvantaged, in a way that their sense of dignity and self worth is restored and maintained. We awarded a grant to support their **Appliances for a Better Life** program, which provides washers and dryers to families in need to provide a more healthy lifestyle, improve self esteem and to provide parents with the skills to better care for themselves.





the **new** normal

Executive Director Andrea Large, KickStart to Career Coordinator
Julie Van Dyke, and board Vice Chair Lynda Matson

The COVID-19 pandemic created a new normal for the people of Mason County.



On all fronts — economy, education, access to nonprofit services — the vulnerable populations of our community shouldered the most burden. Here's what we've done so far in 2020 to combat these disparities:

- Partnered with **United Way** and **Pennies from Heaven Foundation** to create a **COVID-19 Relief Fund**, which raised over \$100,000 for nonprofits providing essential services.
- Raised over \$450,000 on **Match Day** to support 16 local nonprofits that typically rely on private fundraising to fulfill their missions, allowing them to continue operations during the pandemic.
- Provided matching funds for the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Small Business Relief Grants** to help support small businesses in our area impacted by COVID-19. Funds could be used for working capital to support payroll expenses, rent, mortgage payments, utility expenses, or other similar expenses that occur in the ordinary course of business.
- Expanded **Teacher Mini-Grants** to cover additional needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Partnered with local nonprofits, school districts, the hospital, emergency management and municipalities to share resources and coordinate COVID-19 response efforts to ensure supports were in place where needed.



Thank you to the following people who notified us of promised future gifts or created new funds in 2019. These gifts will do great things in our Mason County community...forever.

Promise Gifts

- Don and Jan Fallis have always supported the communities they have been a part of, and Ludington is no different. Because they had many special people believe in and support them, they wanted to do the same for others. They decided to leave an estate gift to support entrepreneurial efforts in Mason County and established a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) so they could enjoy supporting the community now.
- Brad Reed, who is also the chair of our board, started a Build A Fund in his and his childrens' names, and will work toward a DAF. His goal is to help them learn about philanthropy together, giving as a family. He has also established an estate gift to continue their family legacy of loving our community.
- Dan and Julie Van Dyke have always supported the community as a family and through their business, Cottage Works. They established an estate gift to continue their legacy of giving forever.
- An Unrestricted Fund was created as part of a bequest gift from Geri Rohrmoser to support the Scottville Senior Center. Geri was a Scottville native and very involved in the community. She found the Scottville Senior Center very welcoming in her later years and wanted to give back to support that same opportunity for others.
- Danny McCarty had a passion for construction trades. When he passed away in a tragic accident, his aunt, Deb Del Zoppo, and their family established a Scholarship Fund to support students going into that field of study and to honor his memory forever.

- **Friends of the Ludington State Park Fund**

Recently, the Friends of the Ludington State Park partnered with Accessibility Mason County to build a new playground accessible to all children. Recognizing the impact of their work, they established a DAF to build sustainability for future projects to enhance and maintain the park's natural beauty.

- **Urka Family Fund**

Robert Urka never missed an opportunity to give back to the community he loved. Because Robert and the entire Urka family value education, Dorothy, Robert's wife, established a family fund that will support classroom mini-grants in Ludington and Mason County Central school districts to continue their family's legacy of giving forever.



- **Bethany Lutheran Church Fund**

The congregation of Bethany Lutheran Church worshiped and served the community from its original location until 2018, when they sold the building. As a memorial to those who were part of Bethany's ministry and to assist young people desiring post-high school education, they established a Scholarship Fund to support students for many generations to come.

- **Frank R. Petersen Community Fund**

Frank R. Petersen was a wonderful man who embodied the true sense of community. Although Frank has passed on, his children—Lynn Wolfe, Jeffrey Petersen, Michael Petersen and Laurie Young—will continue his legacy of giving in our community through the Frank R. Petersen Community Fund that they established in his memory.

- **Human Trafficking Prevention & Victim Support Fund**

Chris Turnbull and Carmen Biggs have always had a passion for helping others. They joined efforts to open a tea and artisan gift shop that sells items obtained from local and global crafters involved in trafficking prevention and recovery. They established a Build A Fund to work toward a full fund that will support human trafficking prevention efforts and victims in Mason County.



for good. for ever.

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