

Grand Traverse Regional  
**COMMUNITY**  
FOUNDATION

SPARKING POSITIVE CHANGE

**T**  **GETHER,**  
**FOREVER**



**2025**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

**Dear Supporters,**

More than 30 years ago, a group of community champions came together to give back to our region, then, now, and forever. It is our honor and responsibility to continue carrying that work forward in partnership with you.

While our Annual Report looks back on past successes that you helped us achieve, it's also an opportunity to look forward, to see what's possible when we continue working together.

Throughout 2025, we underwent an intensive strategic planning process, figuring out where our compass will guide us over the next five years. What we determined was that we remain oriented toward gratitude for those who came before us and inspired by the generations to come.

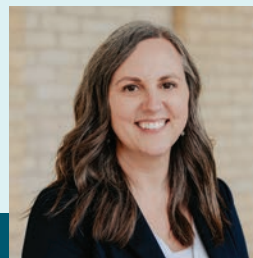
With your support, we will continue to carry forward the spirit of our earliest champions by asking hard questions about what creates opportunity, what fosters belonging, and what stands in the way of a fair and just life for everyone in our region. These reflections will allow us to amplify the good and play a key role in reshaping the gaps.

The enduring hope that fuels our work is that generations from now, others will look back and say that we built the foundation for the future we're grateful to be living today.

We appreciate your trust in our work to spark positive change in our communities. Together as partners, we are shaping a brighter tomorrow where every person across our region can feel connected, supported, and empowered.

**Thank you for joining us on this journey.**

Sincerely,  
Alison and Laura



*Alison Metiva*  
Alison Metiva,  
President & CEO



*Laura E. Asiala*  
Laura Asiala,  
Board Chair



Photo credit: IPR

**YOU HELPED US**  
invest in the growth  
of small businesses.



**YOUR GIVING**  
helped nurture access  
to local news.



**YOUR DONATION**  
gave local rescue animals  
a second chance.

**YOUR SUPPORT**  
allowed students to  
take the next step in their  
educational journeys.





# TOGETHER, WE GIVE



Damian Lockhart loves the place he calls home and is passionate about supporting the region where he grew up. Having thrived in the world of finance over the past 20 years, Damian enjoys giving back and being a problem-solver for clients, which, in part, is what inspired him to get involved with the Community Foundation.

“What motivated me was my lack of knowledge about the organization,” Damian shared. “I was intrigued by the organization’s focus on the five-county region and how they were trying to improve the quality of life for all ages and socio-economic groups. That focus on making this a better place now and in the future was the biggest inspiration to get involved.”

As a person of color who grew up and once again lives in rural Northern Michigan, Damian actively tries to make the community more welcoming for all people.

“Before diversity, equity, and inclusion was such a known concept, there were groups locally doing the silent work to help lay the foundations of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the region,” said Damian. “The Community Foundation’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fund was a natural place for me to continue helping do that work and learn about the amazing businesses and organizations supporting local people.”

As one of our Board Directors from 2018 to 2025 and ongoing donor to our Endowment for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Damian is standing with the people and places of our region that need it most.

**“Since I believe diversity, equity, and inclusion is about uplifting all people to a level playing field, I would not be doing my part without giving back,” said Damian. “I have had so much help in my career, being a person of color in the finance field, that I feel I must do the same for others. Giving to this fund allows me to put my money where my mouth is, helping this community experience things it wouldn’t have otherwise.”**

Having found his way back to Northern Michigan and discovering an outlet for positively impacting his community through these funds, Damian advocates for others to give back.

“If you want to see this community continue to grow with purpose, attract quality talent, and protect our environment, then you absolutely should be a Community Foundation donor,” said Damian. “I would encourage those who can give to check out what the Community Foundation is doing and find an area that fits what’s important to you. I am confident you will find a fund or focus that aligns with your values, too.”

# TOGETHER, WE FUND

Day in and day out, Goodwill Northern Michigan strives to help people move out of homelessness and into safe and secure homes. Thanks to recent efforts, the nonprofit is making great strides in supporting equitable access to housing.

As one of our 2025 Community Funds grant partners, Goodwill Northern Michigan is using the awarded funds to expand its housing and support for chronically unhoused people with disabilities, including mental illness. With this grant, Goodwill Northern Michigan is ensuring its housing-based case managers are well-trained and trauma-informed, allowing them to meet people where they are on their journey. In this way, case managers can provide a supportive, healing environment for clients that emboldens their stabilization and independence.

**“The Community Foundation’s investment allows us to provide the level of engagement, trust-building, and consistent support people exiting long-term homelessness need to remain stable in housing and meet their goals,” said Dan Buron, Goodwill’s Executive Director.**

Through the region’s newly invested in homeless response system, Goodwill Northern Michigan is helping individuals and families explore solutions within their own networks, while receiving minor financial assistance and coaching to repair relationships or negotiate short-term housing arrangements. These efforts are leading to high success rates in connecting people experiencing long-term homelessness with housing.

“Our community’s strong collaboration across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors is essential in this outstanding result,” shared Dan.



Photo credit: Goodwill Northern Michigan

This collective success is brought to life by partners like Goodwill Northern Michigan and by the generosity of funders and individuals, including Board Director and Community Guardian Legacy Society member Jerry Ring.

After moving to Traverse City in 2019, Jerry began supporting the Community Foundation because his values aligned with our own. Jerry believes that the economic, social, and environmental sectors of a community are inseparable, which aligns with Goodwill Northern Michigan’s approach to addressing homelessness through multiple avenues.

By supporting our Community Funds, Jerry has directly impacted Goodwill Northern Michigan’s most recent efforts to help transform area homeless response efforts.

“I take great personal satisfaction that my support of the Community Foundation and other nonprofits in the region, like Goodwill, helps ensure an equitable quality of life for all,” said Jerry.

As an organization, we strive to be a collaborative partner, recognizing that progress requires involvement from all sectors. Both Jerry and Goodwill Northern Michigan are actively contributing to a shared effort to create a fair and just community.

Together, we can support those who need it most. By helping one another through challenges like homelessness, we are creating places where every person feels connected, supported, and empowered.

# TOGETHER, WE RESPOND

In 2025, our newly launched **Quick Response Grants** helped local organizations make meaningful, immediate improvements for the communities they serve. These grants address unplanned needs that fall outside of an organization's regular budget. Last year, we awarded \$56,200, funding 28 projects, including safety improvements, emergency infrastructure, transportation, and program enhancements.

**FREE REIN FARM** was able to purchase a proper tack for a new pony, making horseback riding safer and more accessible for younger clients. As their team shared, "With proper equipment, this pony helps build confidence for our smaller clients."



Photo Credit: Free Rein Farm

**217 RECOVERY** put their grant to use to make critical transportation possible for individuals seeking substance use disorder treatment. Nineteen transports, totaling more than 3,600 miles, connected people to the care they needed. 217 Recovery shared, "Your funding made it possible for us to keep showing up. One client said she wouldn't have made it back without our help."



Photo Credit: 217 Recovery

**HORSE NORTH RESCUE** was able to replace unsafe wire fencing with sturdy wooden planks thanks to grant support, dramatically improving safety for both horses and volunteer trainers. Horse North shared that the new boards "have made such a great change. Trainers now feel safe advancing techniques without worry."



Photo Credit: Horse North Rescue

Photo Credit: Kalkaska County Library



**KALKASKA COUNTY LIBRARY** used grant support for critical repairs to its aging elevator, reopening access to the lower-level collections and event areas. The team shared that the elevator "provides equal access to its materials [and] is essential to patrons with mobility issues."



Photo credit: SEEDS

# TOGETHER, WE COLLABORATE

Since last year, our region has experienced unprecedented pauses and reductions in federal funding, threatening the viability of critical community programs as social and economic pressures have increased demand for services. Early in 2025, we began meeting with other local funding partners, including Rotary Charities of Traverse City and the Oleson Foundation, to assess the regional scope of federal funding disruptions and identify how we could align to support nonprofits throughout this period of upheaval and uncertainty.

“As we’ve met, we’ve thought strategically about what we can all do together to support our partners and our region,” said Stephanie Rustem, Executive Director of the Oleson Foundation. “By keeping an open line of communication, we can get aligned, share resources, leverage opportunities, and tackle challenges together and in our own unique ways.”

As a collaborative, we explored coordinated strategies for regional resilience. In 2025, we conducted regular surveys and hosted convenings to understand how federal funding disruptions were affecting nonprofits and to provide space for connection and shared learning. From this outreach, we learned that 55% of surveyed organizations receive federal funding, and 85% of those report potential impacts—including service reductions or program termination—while rising housing and food insecurity continues to increase demand for basic needs.

“The proposed federal funding cuts have the potential to dismantle the homeless response system as we know it,” shared Ashley Halladay-Schmandt, Director of the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness. “If the cuts go through, up to 70 people in our region who are currently in permanent housing will be at great risk of losing their housing and returning to the streets or shelters.”

The threat of additional funding reductions alongside already implemented cuts are impacting the ways organizations are serving our communities. Unsurprisingly, organizations have been tapping into emergency funds and nonprofit staff are experiencing burnout.

“A lot of unnecessary concern, fear, and confusion has been created, affecting both our staff and service recipients. It’s a lot to manage and it’s a lot of energy being redirected away from what we love to do,” said Sarna Salzman, Executive Director of SEEDS Ecology and Education Centers.

We are committed to listening to nonprofit partners and stewarding collaborative resources to offer support that responds to real-time needs, as evidenced by Rotary Charities leadership in dedicating their fall 2025 workshop series to skill-building for uncertain times. Joined with funding support from us, the Oleson Foundation, and the Huckle Family Foundation, the learning series focused on scenario planning, internal change management, and adapting funding and communication strategies.

“While philanthropy and funders can’t match or replace the scale of federal funding that has benefited our region, we can implement unique, proactive, and responsive ways to be supportive,” said Alison Metiva, our President and CEO.

As we recognize the difficulties that lie ahead, we remain committed to navigating them together. Through collaboration, shared learning, and consistent communication, we can strengthen the networks that support our communities.

**“Stewarding our collective resources into support that is timely, practical, and responsive to what organizations are experiencing now and will feel into the future is key,” said Sakura Takano, CEO of Rotary Charities. “By working together, funders can continue to cultivate a more resilient region alongside our nonprofit partners.”**

# TOGETHER, WE LEAD

Our **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** members represent each of the five counties we serve and they make decisions about funding local organizations through our Youth Endowment. On average, 75 students participate in our YACs annually, collectively awarding more than \$90,000 each year. Their perspectives and knowledge about youth needs are critical to our grantmaking.



**“Youth voices are important because we should be able to have a say in what impacts us around the community. We can speak for ourselves and for others when we decide what really helps us.”**

~ Piper Barnard,  
YAC Member, Benzie County

**“It’s impactful to see so many different groups that are helping different people in our community and to learn about how you can also contribute to these organizations to help.”**

~ Coral Cravey,  
YAC Member, Grand Traverse County



**“As a future citizen and leader, it is my responsibility to ensure that I take part in my civic and moral duty in making the world I inhabit a better place. YACs give me the opportunity to start now in learning how to make a difference, and in so doing help me fulfill that duty, to both my community and the world at large.”**

~ Coltrane Payrani,  
Board Director & YAC Leadership Team Member,  
Kalkaska County



**TOGETHER,**  
WE THRIVE



**WHEN WE  
COME TOGETHER,  
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.**


Through partnership,  
we can have impact together  
and impact forever.

Join us to create a better future for our  
region. Become a Community Funds  
supporter today.



# 2025 FINANCIALS

We honor **donor generosity** by growing every gift's impact, investing funds, stewarding endowments, and making strategic grants that strengthen our region. We connect donor passions with local opportunities so that gifts of all sizes support meaningful work across a variety of cause areas, including arts and culture, education, the environment, health and human services, youth, and more.

<p><b>GIFTS</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>\$4,490,126</b> Total Received</p> <hr/> <p><b>\$10 – \$1.5M</b> Donation Range</p> <hr/> <p><b>1,422</b> Donations from 912 Donor Partners</p>	 <p><b>GRANTS &amp; SCHOLARSHIPS</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>\$4,008,624</b> Total Awarded</p> <hr/> <p><b>1,184</b> Awards</p> <hr/> <p><b>\$509,728</b> Scholarships Awarded to 223 Recipients</p>
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**“The Community Foundation can steward gifts for current needs with the capacity to both anticipate and respond to future needs. My commitment is founded on my trust and confidence in the Community Foundation, the staff and Board, and the history of integrity and transparency.”**

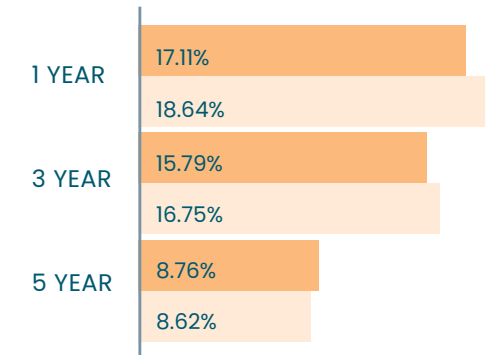
~ Phil Ellis,  
Past GTRCF Executive Director and Community Guardian Legacy Society Member

## INVESTMENTS

We invest the funds entrusted to us using both short and long-term strategies so that we can support our communities today while also protecting these resources for the future.

Investment Returns vs. Benchmark

actual
benchmark

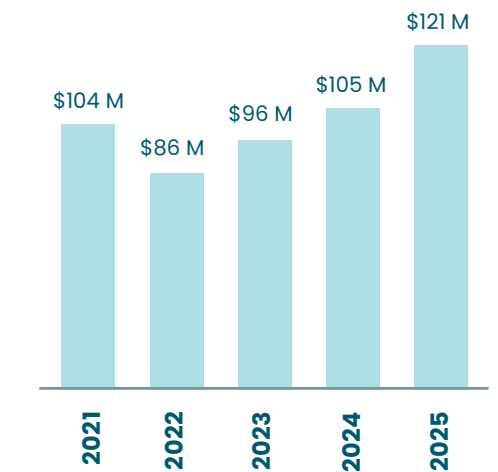


## ASSETS



**2025 Designated Assets** **\$113.1M**  
Designated assets have a set area of focus or benefit, such as scholarships or grants for specific organizations.

**2025 Community Fund Assets** **\$7.7M**  
Community Fund assets are responsive and flexible resources to meet areas of greatest need in our region.



History of Assets by Year

## IMPACT INVESTING

Impact investing is one of the tools that expands our sources of community support. It involves using a portion of our endowment assets locally to achieve both a social and financial return.

<p><b>\$2M</b> Invested from Endowment Portfolio</p>	<p><b>17</b> Loans made by CDFI Partners</p>	<p><b>15</b> Entities Receiving Loans</p>
<p><b>\$5M+</b> Leveraged Beyond Our Investment</p>	<p><b>81</b> Jobs Created or Retained</p>	<p><b>4</b> Counties Represented in Loans</p>

For additional financial information, please visit our website: [GTRCF.org](https://www.gtrcf.org).

# TOGETHER, WE CHAMPION GENEROSITY

## BOARD OFFICERS

Laura Asiala, *Chair, Antrim County*

Barbara Matthews, *Vice-Chair, Antrim County*

John Bercini, *Treasurer, Grand Traverse County*

Mark Wilson, *Secretary, Grand Traverse County*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Brad Kik  
Barbara Matthews  
Sara McGuire  
Royce Ragland

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Lilyana Gunther-Thompson\*  
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Oran Hesterman  
Edward Lanphier  
Ranve Martinson  
Larry Nelson  
Don Sheets

**Thank you to the following community members for their years of service on the Board:**

Annie DeVries, Beth Dunckel, Jürgen Griswold, Damian Lockhart

*Board List as of January 2026 | \*Youth Representative*

## STAFF

Gina Thornbury, *Senior Manager of Community Impact*

Paul Kester, *Vice President of Finance & Administration*

Kristina Pepelko, *Director of Strategic Communications*

Alison Metiva, *President & CEO*

Steve Wade, *Vice President of Community Impact*

Brittany Morton-Smith, *Operations Coordinator*

Mercedes Bowyer, *Director of Development*

Pam Amundsen, *Senior Manager of Development and Planned Giving*

Torey Caviston, *Community Impact Coordinator*

**Thank you to Joan Hughes for 25 years of service.**

## ANNUAL REPORT CREDITS

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Grand Traverse Regional

**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

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Give today  
or plan for a future gift.



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